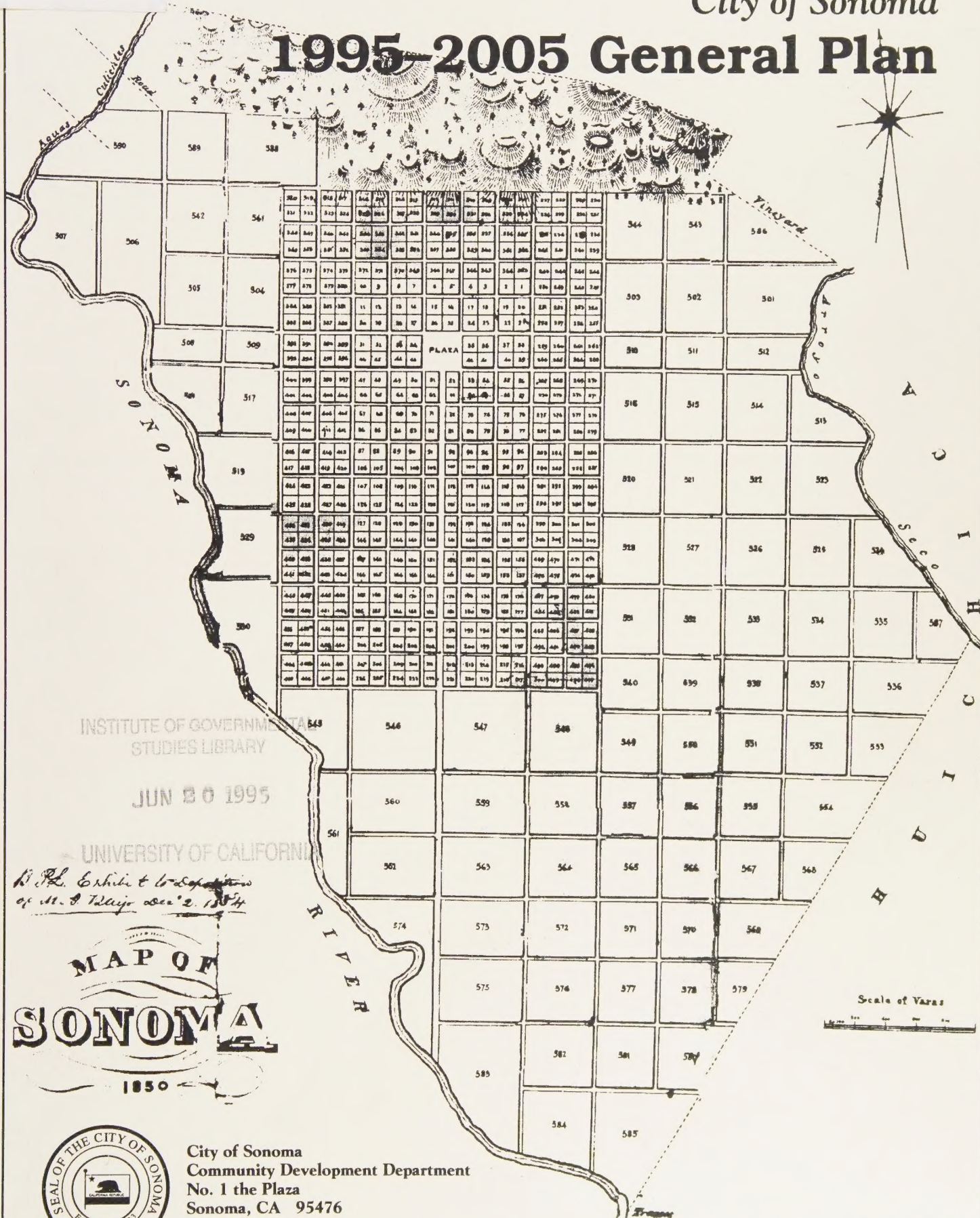


City of Sonoma

1995-2005 General Plan

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MAP OF
SONOMA

1850



City of Sonoma
Community Development Department
No. 1 the Plaza
Sonoma, CA 95476
(707) 938-3743

Adopted August 30, 1995

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Content and Purpose

*City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan*





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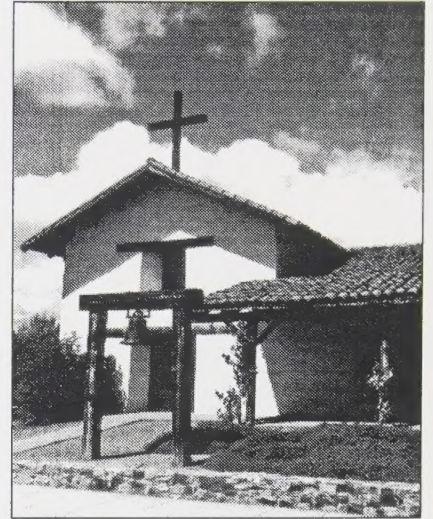
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CONTENT AND PURPOSE

Since 1964, the City of Sonoma has had three General Plans (1964, 1974 and 1985). Each is a very different document in scope and detail, but one quality remains consistent: these general plans represent the collective vision of the community and are an expression of its desire to preserve and improve upon the essential characteristics that define Sonoma. In the 31 years since Sonoma's first General Plan, the requirements for what must be included in a General Plan have changed so dramatically that the plans can hardly be called general any more. The community's expectations about the content and policy direction of the General Plan have also grown over the years, leading to more extensive community involvement and a greater sense of ownership in the plan. That sense of ownership translates directly into long-term support for the policy direction embodied by the plan and more consistent, effective implementation by the City's decision-makers.

State law dictates much of what must be included in a General Plan but allows great latitude to the local jurisdiction to determine the overall format and to add elements as necessary. Every General Plan must address the following topics: Land Use, Housing, Circulation, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Public Safety. These topics are typically set out as separate chapters, called elements, of the plan. This document started as an update of the Community Development, Housing, and Conservation and Open Space Elements of the 1985-2005 Sonoma General Plan, but evolved to include the following elements: Community Development (Land Use, Town Design, Public Art, Historic and Archeological Resources); Environmental Resources (Conservation, Open Space, Recreation); Local Economy (Local Economy, Tourism); Circulation (Roadways, Bicycles, Pedestrians); and Housing. The 20-year time frame of the 1985 General Plan was not changed, so the horizon date is still the year 2005. At the conclusion of the update process, the Noise and Public Safety elements of the 1985 plan were amended to ensure internal consistency.

This document is the product of numerous community meetings as well as individual communications from residents, property owners and business owners. Community meetings occurred in four phases. The first phase (held in late summer of 1992) was intended to identify the most important issues to be addressed through the update process. The second phase (held in the winter of 1993) focused on achieving consensus on how the plan should respond to the issues identified in the first phase, after which an initial draft of the General Plan was produced. The third phase consisted of public hearings and study sessions conducted by the Planning Commission on the draft plan, held from September of 1993 to January, 1995. The fourth phase—public hearings before the City Council—concluded with the Council's adoption of the plan on August 30, 1995.



Sonoma, the last of the California Mission towns, was founded in 1835. The Mission San Francisco de Solano, shown above, was completed in 1840.

The resulting community vision is reflected in the goals, policies and programs of the updated plan and can be summarized as follows:

1. A reduced Sphere of Influence, in comparison to that of the 1985 General Plan, and a commensurate reduction in the encroachment of urban development into the agricultural lands surrounding the city.
2. A greater emphasis on town design and on improving the quality of all new development through the adoption of comprehensive design guidelines.
3. A greater emphasis on a sustainable local economy, including local job creation and support of existing agriculture and tourism.
4. Expanding opportunities for valley-wide cooperation in planning and economic development.
5. Preservation and enhancement of natural resources, and identification and acquisition of important open space lands in and around Sonoma.
6. Expanding opportunities to utilize alternatives to the automobile.
7. Mixing housing for various income levels in larger residential projects.
8. Ensuring that growth pays for itself and does not outpace the availability of public services or facilities.
9. Improving recreational and cultural resources.

The contents of the plan are divided into two sections. The first section contains the updated elements, including a brief introduction followed by the goals, policies, and implementation programs. The second section is called the "Technical Appendix" and contains additional background information and support data for the foregoing policy section. Throughout the document, figures, tables, maps, photographs and notes are used in the margins to supplement the main text and illustrate certain policy statements, but they are not essential to the reader's understanding of the policy direction and land use recommendations proposed in the General Plan.



Community Development Element

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Although all of its elements are equal in terms of state general plan law, as a practical matter the Community Development Element of the 1995 General Plan is the centerpiece of the document. This section of the plan sets the stage for the remainder by defining land use designations and boundaries, establishing policy on growth and the provision of infrastructure and services, providing a framework for cooperative efforts between the City and the County, and setting forth a town design program with city-wide policies as well as guidelines for specific areas. The goals, policies, and implementation measures of the Community Development Element embody community values expressed through a variety of sources, but primarily from the many study sessions and public hearings held in the course of the general plan update and from the Vision Statement developed by the City Council.

In the view of the town's future set forth in the Community Development Element, Sonoma retains its small-town feeling by controlling growth and maintaining a tight sphere of influence. The greenbelt surrounding the town is not only scenic, it supports a healthy agricultural industry that is a mainstay of the vibrant local economy. The city itself is characterized by diversity in land uses and in building types, unified by a comfortable small-town scale. Services and infrastructure are provided in a controlled, efficient manner, and are expanded when and if necessary. The community's past serves as a vital element of its future, with the town's historic buildings preserved and made seismically safe, to be used and enjoyed by new generations of businesses and residents. Sonoma's residents enjoy the pace and scale of country living with the added benefits of urban services, a range of commercial services including quality restaurants and shopping, arts and recreation opportunities to rival a large city, and a sophistication which comes from a diverse population in contact with visitors from around the world. Perhaps most importantly, Sonoma's residents share a sense of community that grows from its being a working town that provides opportunities for housing and employment for all segments of the population.

COMMUNITY DIRECTIONS

This ideal for Sonoma is based on the following set of principles derived from and shaped by the community throughout the course of the update:

- In order to best preserve the agriculture and open space surrounding Sonoma, the sphere of influence should be restricted, while accommodating a reasonable amount of future development.

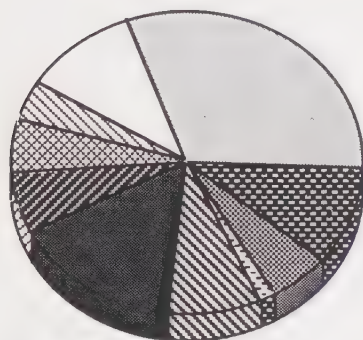
State Requirements

Basic legal and informational mandates for general plans are established by state law, including specific requirements for individual elements. The Community Development Element of Sonoma's General Plan corresponds to the state-mandated land use element. Following is a summary of the requirements pertaining to land use elements:

- Must address "... the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, including agriculture, natural resources, recreation, and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses of land."
- Land Use map or diagram.
- Standards for population density (for residential land use categories).
- Standards of building intensity (for each land use designation).
- Areas subject to flooding (this requirement is addressed in the Public Safety Element of the General Plan).

(See Title 7, section 65302 (a), California Government Code.)

Existing Land Use, 1994



- Single Family (31.4%)
- ▤ Multi-Family (10.4%)
- ▥ Mobile Home (5.4%)
- ▦ Mixed Use (1.5%)
- ▧ Commercial (8.6%)
- ▨ Light Industrial (1.1%)
- ▩ Public (14.4%)
- Park (6.5%)
- Hillside (5.8%)
- ▬ Agriculture (4.2%)
- Vacant (10.7%)

Source: Community
Development Department

Table 1

- Growth in Sonoma should be controlled. The provision of services and infrastructure should be tied to existing needs and planned development so that expansion occurs in a controlled, cost-effective manner.
- The City and County should cooperate in their planning efforts, especially in terms of establishing an economic plan for Sonoma Valley, preserving agriculture, and developing a specific plan for Eighth Street East.
- Within its sphere of influence, Sonoma is and should continue to be characterized by variety, in terms of land uses, building types, and housing, but this diversity should be consistent with preserving the town's small-scale and historic character.
- New residential development should emulate the desirable characteristics of existing neighborhoods by providing variety in lot and unit sizes and a range of prices, including opportunities for very low, low, and moderate income households, while responding to site and neighborhood conditions. As called for in the City Council's vision statement, those who live in Sonoma should be able to work in Sonoma.

In the sections below, the methods used to implement these directions are described, as is the Land Use Plan and the land use designations of the General Plan.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT DATA

In addition to providing goals, policies and implementation measures, the Community Development Element includes a Land Use Plan and definitions of land use designations in terms of density and intensity. The Land Use Plan (see page 30) sets forth the City's sphere of influence and, within that boundary, designates different types of land uses in order to shape and contain future development. The sphere of influence boundary, which establishes the limit of annexation for the life of the General Plan, is relatively restricted. It contains an area of 363 acres, 603 acres less than the potential annexation area of the 1985 General Plan, a reduction of 62%. Reductions in the annexation area occurred mainly in the north, to prevent the extension of infrastructure and services to hillside areas, and to the south and southeast, to limit the expansion of urban development. Table 2 provides summary information on existing land use, and compares the land use designations and buildout potential of the 1985 and 1995 General Plans.

In terms of existing land uses, the largest category of land use within city limits is single-family residential, which constitutes slightly less than one-third of all land. Public lands (including schools, the hospital, and the state park lands) account for the

General Plan Land Use and Buildout Potential

Use Category ¹	Existing ² Land Use	1985 General Plan City Limits	SOI	1995 General Plan City Limits	SOI
Single-Family	427.01	475.19	609.47	449.42	26.86
Sonoma Res.	0.00	0.00	0.00	47.78	101.81
Multi-Family	140.76	363.95	54.82	170.83	8.21
Mobile Home	73.27	0.00	0.00	69.17	0.00
Rural Residential	0.00	5.48	0.00	11.18	69.90
Mixed Use	20.95	0.00	0.00	81.76	23.49
Commercial	116.38	115.53	17.88	129.71	44.20
Wine Production	14.67	14.70	0.00	14.36	0.00
Public	195.50	165.93	0.00	180.99	0.00
Park	88.22	88.15	89.00	82.48	89.00
Hillside	79.09	79.75	145.23	72.79	0.00
Agricultural	57.62	49.92	49.69	48.13	0.00
Vacant	145.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Acreage:	1,358.60	1,358.60	966.09	1,358.60	363.47

Eighth Street East Area:

Light Industrial		324.00	0.00	0.00
Office Park		118.00	0.00	0.00
Specific Plan Area		0.00	0.00	429.00
Total:		442.00	0.00	429.00

Housing Units: ³	Existing ²	Potential	Potential
Single-Family	2,786	267	1,944
Multi-Family	1,138	457	607
Mobile Home	487	0	0
Total:	4,411	724	2,551

Population:⁴

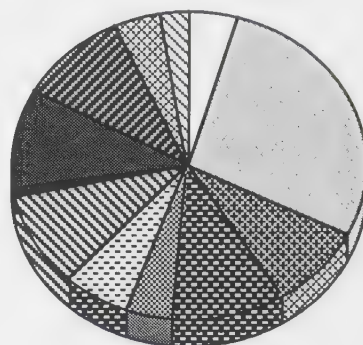
Total:	8,696	1,526	5,377	2,460	1,750
---------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------

- 1) "Single-family" corresponds to the "Low Density Residential" General Plan land use designation. The commercial category includes the "Gateway Commercial" land use designation. The multi-family land use designations (Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, and Housing Opportunity) are grouped together.
- 2) As of January, 1994.
- 3) Buildout estimates are based on an inventory of vacant and under-utilized parcels (updated as of October, 1994) assuming maximum development potential by General Plan designation.
- 4) Population estimates are based on a household size of 2.108, the average household size in Sonoma as of 1994.

Source: Community Development Department/
California Department of Finance

Table 2

1995 General Plan Land Use (City Limits and Sphere of Influence)



- Rural Residential (4.7%)
- Low Density Residential (27.7%)
- Sonoma Residential (8.7%)
- Multi-Family (10.4%)
- Mobile Home (4.0%)
- Mixed Use (6.1%)
- Commercial (10.1%)
- Wine Production (0.8%)
- Public (10.5%)
- Park (10.0%)
- Hillside (4.2%)
- Agriculture (2.8%)

Source: Community
Development Department

Table 3

Infrastructure and Services

The actual level of development experienced under the General Plan will be contingent upon many factors, including the provision of infrastructure and services. These two concepts are closely related.

"Services" refer to public and quasi-public activities undertaken to meet community needs, such as the provision of water, police and fire protection, and schooling.

"Infrastructure" refers to the physical improvements, such as roads, water mains, and classrooms, needed to deliver services to the public.

For the most part, goals, policies and implementation measures regarding services and infrastructure are found in the Community Development Element, starting with Goal CDE-2 (see page 20). Another pertinent area is the Circulation Element, which addresses the nature, timing, and funding of traffic, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements.

A summary discussion of the challenges facing Sonoma related to the provision of infrastructure and services is included in the technical appendix of the General Plan, pages 133-135.

next largest category, at 11.4%, followed by vacant and underutilized properties (10.7%), and multi-family residential (10.4%). Under the 1995 General Plan, single family development will continue to be the dominant land use, at 32% of all land within the sphere of influence (including city limits), through the Rural Residential and Low Density Residential designations. In addition, the "Sonoma Residential" designation, a lower density category, constitutes almost 9% of land within the sphere of influence. The next largest categories, after Low Density Residential, are the Public and the multi-family land use designations at 11% each, followed by commercial at 10%. Parkland is also a substantial component, accounting for nearly 10% of all lands within the sphere of influence.

In terms of development potential, the General Plan has a build-out capacity of 1,158 single family units and 838 multi-family units (including mixed use development). In comparison, the 1985 General Plan had a buildout potential of 2,211 single family units and 1,064 multi-family units. Buildout represents the theoretical development capacity of the General Plan, but actual growth will be controlled by a Growth Management Ordinance as well as the normal planning process. Table 4, below, describes potential development based on the level of growth allowed under the 1980 Growth Management Ordinance, which allows up to 100 units per year of residential development. As discussed below, the allowable rate of development could change through the review of the Growth Management Ordinance required by the General Plan.

**Potential Population and Housing Growth
(Based on 1980 Growth Management Ordinance)**

<u>Growth Rate</u> (100 units/year)	<u>Existing</u> 1994	<u>Projected</u>		
		1995	2000	2005
Units	4,411	4,511	5,011	5,511
Population	8,696	9,509	10,563	11,617

1) Population estimates are based on a household size of 2.108, the average household size in Sonoma as of 1994.

Source: Community Development Department/
California Department of Finance

Table 4

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

As noted above, the City's current Growth Management Ordinance, which was adopted in 1980, limits residential development in Sonoma to an average of 100 units per year. The Growth Management Ordinance was developed in 1979 through a lengthy

study which evaluated the fiscal and economic consequences of nine growth scenarios using a computer model originally developed by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). Among the factors addressed in the model were general City revenues, water services and infrastructure requirements, police and fire services, street maintenance, and capital improvements. A 20-year projection period was used. At the conclusion of the study, it was determined that an annual average growth rate of about 100 units per year would allow for manageable increases in service and infrastructure needs without exceeding the available water supply during the projection period. Since its adoption, the Growth Management Ordinance has been effective in regulating the rate of growth in Sonoma and has, over the long term, provided stability in City revenues and expenditures as well as efficiencies in service and infrastructure provision.

A key implementation measure of this General Plan is the review and update of the Growth Management Ordinance to ensure its relevance to current conditions and its consistency with the updated General Plan. The review, as called for by implementation measure 4 of the Community Development Element, would be based on a new study, intended to provide “. . . a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis of anticipated new development, including consideration of the need for additional public services and infrastructure.” Because the General Plan represents the City’s basic expression of land use policy, it is critical that the Growth Management Ordinance reflect the data, assumptions, and policy directions set forth in the updated plan.

Sonoma recognizes its responsibility to provide housing opportunities for all income groups, a responsibility which must be balanced with the community’s need for ensuring controlled, cost-effective growth. Over the course of implementing the 1980 Growth Management Ordinance, numerous exemptions and incentives were provide to assure the provision of affordable housing. Similar allowances must be made in any revision of the ordinance. Implementation measure 2 of the Housing Element requires that affordable housing incentives be incorporated in the update of the Growth Management Ordinance and that affordable developments funded and built by the City be exempted from any processing restrictions.

THE LAND USE PLAN

Statistics give only a limited picture of the disposition of uses set forth in the Land Use Plan (see page 30). Because the plan was constructed from the context of the town as it exists on the ground, a brief tour of the Land Use Plan in relation to existing uses is provided in this section.

Sonoma City Hall

Sonoma's City Hall, the seat of local government is located, appropriately enough, in the center of the town plaza. Construction of the building, which is a historic landmark, began on February 24, 1906. The building was not finished until 1908, as work was disrupted by the 1906 earthquake. It is said that the building's unique design, in which the "main" facade design is repeated on all four sides, was a bow to local merchants on the Plaza, none of whom wished to look upon the back door.



Town Center, Northern Hills, Broadway

Starting from the center of town, at the Plaza, the Land Use Plan maintains the existing commercial district and seeks to enliven it with an additional residential presence through mixed use development and additional higher density development in the established multi-family areas surrounding the commercial core. Two blocks north of the Plaza, there is a collection of parks and public facilities, including Depot Park, Arnold Field, the Veterans' Memorial Building, the Police Station, with its seven acres of playing fields, and Mountain Cemetery. The sphere of influence has been brought back to existing city limits on the north, in order to prevent the extension of urban services to the hills. The hillside areas within the city are designated as such, with the Rural Residential designation applied to the base of Schocken Hill. South of the downtown, the Broadway corridor is designated for mixed use between Maple Street and the proposed Four Corners commercial center.

East and Southeast Sonoma

East Sonoma represents the city's largest and oldest single-family residential area. Some room within the sphere of influence is provided for additional residential development on East MacArthur Street and on Denmark Street, south of Este Madera. Southeast Sonoma, in the area bounded by Fifth Street East, Eastin Drive, and Napa Road, is also designated for residential expansion, although the sphere of influence in this area has been considerably reduced from that of the 1985 General Plan. This area is identified as a "Design Area" on the Town Design map, meaning that policies to ensure its coordinated development will ultimately

be established in the Town Design Guidelines. For the most part, developable lands in this area are designated as Sonoma Residential, a land use designation inspired by the qualities of old Sonoma which requires variety in lot sizes, unit types, and affordability. This designation is also applied to an area within the sphere of influence just east of the Armstrong Estates subdivision, on the south side of East Napa Street.

The Dolcini property is one of the largest undeveloped tracts within city limits. The site, which has an area of about 24 acres, is located next to the High School. It is designated in the General Plan for agriculture, but, in recognition of the School District's acquisition of this site, a "Potential School Site" overlay has been applied to the property. This overlay, which is also applied to the Montini property, indicates sites which may be appropriately developed with school facilities, but it does not require that use.

Four Corners and Southwest Sonoma

To the south, the Four Corners area would have a mix of resident- and visitor-serving uses and would feature high quality, pedestrian-scale architecture, open space, and generous landscaping. As in the Plaza area, mixed use development and adjacent multi-family development would be encouraged as a means of reducing traffic and encouraging a residential presence. Objectives for the area include integrating future commercial uses with existing and planned neighborhoods and ensuring an appropriate scale. This area, too, is the subject of design guidelines provided in the Town Design section. Four Corners is a gateway to Sonoma and marks the southernmost boundary of the city.

In southwest Sonoma, pockets of rural residential development would be retained, including the Harrington tract (at the corner of Leveroni Road and Fifth Street West) and along Malet Street, north of Newcomb. The designation reflects the existing large lot development of those areas and provides large areas of rural development within the city's potential annexation area, further enhancing the diversity of the city's housing stock. The 42-acre Leveroni property, which is located adjacent to city limits in the southwest (at the corner of Fifth Street West and Leveroni Road), has been removed from the sphere of influence. The sphere of influence in this area has been considerably reduced from that of the 1985 General Plan, which extended south of Leveroni Road to Fisher Lane. In the 1995 General Plan, the sphere of influence stops at Napa/Leveroni Road, with the exception of some parcels that are part of the Four Corners commercial area.

West Sonoma, South of Napa Street

Although already largely developed, this area, which is composed



The Dolcini property, as viewed from Dewell Drive.



Sonoma Valley Hospital

As of 1995, the Sonoma Valley Hospital was licensed for 92 beds and employed 350 full-time workers.

of a mixture of single-family and multi-family neighborhoods, contains some key vacant or underutilized parcels. In the multi-family neighborhood located along Fifth Street West, south of West MacArthur, there are several sites well suited for additional multi-family development. As in other areas of Sonoma where there are opportunities for infill multi-family development, care must be taken to provide a good fit between new development and established neighborhoods.

In the area east of Fifth Street West, between MacArthur Street and Perkins Street, the Sonoma Valley Hospital exerts a significant influence on an otherwise largely single-family neighborhood. The hospital actually predates the residential development in that area, but it is now hemmed in by houses. At the same time, the medical needs of the community have increased with the population growth and with advances in treatment. Coupled with growing demand and greater specialization, the trend toward shorter hospital stays has led to more traffic and more friction with area residents. The hospital is a critical institution which serves all of Sonoma Valley and it may not have the resources to relocate. Patience and imagination will be needed to provide for the future medical needs of the community while minimizing stress on the hospital's neighbors.

The emerging Curtin Lane neighborhood, which is mainly characterized by lower-density, multi-family housing, contains some sites suitable for a similar level of development, the largest of which is the Smith property adjacent to Sonoma Creek. Should this property be developed in the future, consideration should be given to providing public access to the creek area by extending the existing creekside bikepath located to the north. The Sonoma Residential designation applied to this property allows densities compatible with adjacent multi-family neighborhoods, but provides the design flexibility needed to preserve the special qualities of the site.

West Napa Street

In recognition of existing development, West Napa Street, from Fifth Street West to the Sonoma Highway, is designated for commercial development. Pockets of adjacent mixed use and multi-family development would be established to provide a residential presence, reduce car trips, and create a buffer for more traffic-sensitive residential areas. New development will be subject to design guidelines and public improvement requirements, especially sidewalk widenings and tree plantings, intended to upgrade the appearance of the area and improve conditions for pedestrians. In recognition of the neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the commercial corridor, use restrictions and buffering requirements would be applied to new development bordering residential districts.

West Sonoma, North of Napa Street

This area is the second largest block of single-family housing within the city, and it also contains the Vallejo Home State Park, the largest tract of permanent open space within city limits. The opportunity for additional single family development exists on the Montini property (which is also designated as a potential school site) and at the northern intersection of West Spain Street and Fifth Street, where the area of potential multi-family development has been reduced from the 1985 General Plan. In this area, too, the sphere of influence has been cut back, now stopping just past the Vineyard shopping center, north of Verano Avenue. The 1985 General Plan had extended the sphere of influence to include Michael Drive.

Sonoma Highway

Sonoma Highway is designated as a mixed use and commercial corridor, with the city's northern gateway at the intersection of Verano Avenue. There are several opportunities for commercial redevelopment in this area which could greatly upgrade its appearance, with the bowling alley property a notable example. As is the case with West Napa Street, sidewalk improvements and the addition of street trees are recommended here, and, consistent with other commercial districts in Sonoma, opportunities have been identified for mixed use and adjacent multi-family development in order to promote walking.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Corresponding to the various designations shown on the Land Use Plan are the definitions of the General Plan's land use categories. (It should be noted that the "Potential School Site" overlay shown on the Land Use Plan is not a land use category, but is merely intended to identify specific parcels which may be suitable for development with school facilities.) While the land use categories are implemented through specific zoning designations, the General Plan provides the overall parameters of density and intensity appropriate to each one. These terms are discussed more fully below, along with the concept of inclusionary requirements.

Density

In the definitions provided below, "density" refers to the number of residential units normally allowed per gross acre (prior to dedications for streets and other improvements). The density range set forth in the definition for a particular land use designation is its "base density." On any particular property, the maximum base density may be exceeded if a proposed development receives a density bonus or if the property is developed with a second unit. A



The Vallejo Home State Park, shown here from its entrance on West Spain Street, has an area of almost 60 acres.

density bonus is an incentive provided to developers of affordable housing which allows a 25% increase from the maximum base density applicable to the site. A second unit is a small rental unit which may be allowed on owner-occupied residential properties, subject to regulations regarding size and appearance. Density bonuses and second units are allowed for by state laws that preempt many local controls. For a more detailed description of density bonuses, see page 45 of the Housing Element.

Intensity

The concept of intensity has two parts—use and building mass—both of which are regulated broadly in the General Plan land use definitions and much more specifically in implementing ordinances and regulations such as the Zoning Ordinance, the Subdivision Ordinance, and the Town Design Guidelines. Uses may be allowed as of right (that is, without the need for any discretionary planning approvals) or by use permit, in which case review by the Planning Commission is required in the course of a fully noticed public hearing. In the land use definitions provided below, uses allowed as of right are not specifically identified, in order to allow flexibility in designing zoning guidelines. Activities for which use permit review is required are specifically identified, however.

As with uses, building mass is broadly regulated in the land use definitions and more specifically controlled through implementing ordinances and regulations. In the land use definitions, building mass is limited by height restrictions (given in the form of stories and feet) and coverage limitations (described as a percentage of site area). To further clarify, coverage refers to the building footprint, but does not include parking and drives. The coverage and height limits set forth in the land use definitions are maximums. Individual zoning districts may have more restrictive requirements, and even greater restrictions may be applied through the Town Design Guidelines and individual project review.

Inclusionary Requirement

The purpose of an inclusionary requirement is to ensure that a component of affordable housing, above a specified threshold number of units, is provided as part of new residential development. In essence, any development above a certain size is required to include a percentage of affordable units, with the percentage of affordable units and the level of affordability (very low, low, moderate) set as part of the General Plan policy establishing the requirement. A 10-unit development, for example, subject to a 10% low income inclusionary requirement, would be required to designate one unit as affordable to low income households.

The Sonoma General Plan, through implementation measure 1 of the Housing Element, establishes a 10% inclusionary requirement applicable to all residential development of five units or more. Inclusionary units must be affordable to low or moderate income households. Because this requirement is applied across the board, it is not referenced, for the most part, in the land use definitions. The one exception is the Sonoma Residential designation: Because that designation requires a larger percentage of inclusionary units than the baseline established in the Housing Element, its unique inclusionary requirement is noted in the definition. (Note: in developments of more than five but fewer than 10 units, the percentage of inclusionary units would be one unit.)

Definitions

The definitions of the land use categories used in the General Plan are as follows:

Rural Residential: This designation is intended to preserve areas of lower density development within city limits, especially adjacent to hillsides and in established low density neighborhoods. Day care facilities, fire stations, post offices, and similar activities may be allowed subject to use permit review. Home occupations are allowed, but retail and office uses are not.

Density: 2.0 residential units per acre, maximum (excluding second units). Maximum density bonus of 25%.

Intensity: Two-story (or 35-foot) height limit and a maximum of 40% coverage for residential development.

Low Density Residential: This designation is primarily intended for urban density single-family housing and duplexes, with attached or clustered development allowed by use permit, in association with related public improvements such as streets. Other uses compatible with the primary use may be allowed subject to use permit review, including transitional housing, schools, day care facilities, churches, fire stations, post offices, nursing homes, convalescent hospitals, and parking areas. Home occupations are allowed, but retail and office uses are not.

Density: 2.0 to 5.0 residential units per acre (excluding second units). Maximum density bonus of 25%.

Intensity: Two-story (or 30-foot) height limit and a maximum of 40% coverage for residential development.

Sonoma Residential: This designation (normally, but not always, applicable to properties of at least three acres in size) has three purposes: 1) to ensure a variety of unit types and lot sizes within new

Neighborhood Compatibility

When developments are proposed for sites within or near established neighborhoods, ensuring compatibility is a major consideration.

This is especially true for multi-family development, which, it is often assumed, somehow "won't fit in."

The issue of compatibility is addressed not only in the Town Design guidelines discussed in the Community Development Element, but also in goals, policies, and implementation measures found in the Housing Element. Goal HE-2, for example, calls for the City to "... ensure that new residential development is consistent with Sonoma's town character and with neighborhood conditions."

To achieve that goal, the Housing Element includes a variety of policies and implementation measures aimed at encouraging neighborhood input and ensuring high quality design. See page 50 of the Housing Element for the goals and policies used to achieve neighborhood compatibility in new development.

development; 2) to provide sufficient flexibility in site planning and design to allow individual developments to respond to site and neighborhood conditions; and, 3) to ensure a range of housing prices and provide living opportunities for middle-income households. Through this designation, housing of different price ranges are mingled, rather than segregated. A 20% inclusionary requirement applies to developments of five units or more. Half of the inclusionary units must be affordable to moderate income units and half affordable to low income households. Home occupations are allowed, but retail and office uses are not.

Density: 3.0 to 8.0 residential units per acre (excluding second units). Maximum density bonus of 25%.

Intensity: Two-story (or 30-foot) height limit and a maximum of 40% coverage for residential development.

Medium Density Residential: This designation is intended to provide opportunities for medium density multi-family housing (along with related public improvements), especially in transition areas between higher density and single family development. Transitional housing, schools, day care facilities, churches, fire stations, post offices, nursing homes, convalescent hospitals, parking areas, and similar activities may be allowed subject to use permit review. Home occupations are allowed, but retail and office uses are not.

Density: 6.0 to 10.0 residential units per acre (excluding second units). Maximum density bonus of 25%.

Intensity: Two-story (or 30-foot) height limit and a maximum of 50% coverage for residential development.

High Density Residential: This designation is intended to provide opportunities for higher density multi-family housing (along with related public improvements), especially adjacent or close to commercial centers and mixed use development. Transitional housing, schools, day care facilities, churches fire stations, post offices, nursing homes, convalescent hospitals, parking areas, and similar activities may be allowed subject to use permit review. Home occupations are allowed, but retail and office uses are not.

Density: 9.0 to 12.0 residential units per acre (excluding second units). Maximum density bonus of 25%.

Intensity: Two-story (or 30-foot) height limit and a maximum of 50% coverage for residential development.

Housing Opportunity Sites: This designation identifies sites suitable for higher density and affordable development, especially adja-

cent or close to commercial centers and mixed use areas, and is intended to provide opportunities for low and very low income households in particular. Uses other than housing and associated improvements are not allowed. Home occupations are allowed.

Density: 15 to 20 residential units per acre (excluding second units). Maximum density bonus of 25%.

Intensity: Two-story (30-foot) height limit and a maximum of 60% coverage for residential development.

Mobile Home: This designation is intended to recognize the city's existing mobile home parks. Home occupations are allowed, but retail and office uses are not.

Density: 7.0 mobile home units per acre (maximum). Maximum density bonus of 25%.

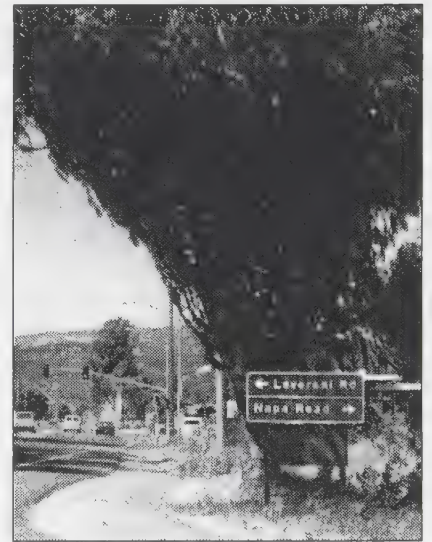
Intensity: One-story (16-foot) height limit for units and maximum of 50% coverage for mobile home development. Common facilities and buildings are subject to a 30-foot height limit.

Commercial: This designation is intended to provide areas for retail, hotel, service, medical, and office development, in association with apartments and mixed use developments and necessary public improvements. Schools, day care facilities, fire stations, post offices, emergency shelters, and similar activities may be allowed subject to use permit review. Heavy manufacturing and industrial uses are not allowed.

Density: 15.0 residential units per acre, maximum (excluding second units). Maximum density bonus of 25%. (Density limitation does not apply to hotels.)

Intensity: Two-story (30-foot) height limit and maximum coverage ranging from 70% to 100%, depending on specific zoning and design guidelines.

Gateway Commercial: This designation is applied specifically to the Four Corners area and the Verano triangle. It is intended to promote high-quality neighborhood- and visitor-serving office and retail development while implementing a coordinated design program for these areas, in keeping with their status as gateways to the community and in recognition of the need for buffering existing and planned residential development. Building coverage is limited, compared to other commercial areas, in order to allow for landscaping and transition areas. Neighborhood- and visitor-serving office and retail uses are allowed, as well as cultural and recreational facilities, hotels, and small-scale agricultural support facili-



Four Corners

The Four Corners area (at the intersection of Broadway and Napa/Leveroni Road) is designated for development as a commercial center in the General Plan. This area has been assigned the "Gateway Commercial" land use designation. This designation, in conjunction with policies and implementation measures found throughout the General Plan, is intended to ensure that the development of Four Corners is compatible with existing and planned residential development and enhances the area as a primary gateway to Sonoma.



Offices or commercial below, with residences above. This pattern of development is found in both historic structures, like the Salvadore Vallejo adobe, above, and newer developments, such as the one on First Street West shown below.



Policies and programs encouraging mixed-use development occur throughout the General Plan, beginning in the Community Development Element with the "Mixed Use" land use designation. Additional measures supporting this objective may be found in the Local Economy Element, the Housing Element, and the Circulation Element.

Mixed use development reduces auto dependency, promotes walking, and contributes to the vitality of commercial areas.

ties, in association with apartments and mixed use developments and necessary public improvements. Schools, day care facilities, fire stations, and post offices, emergency shelters and similar activities may be allowed subject to use permit review.

Density: 15.0 residential units per acre, maximum (excluding second units). Maximum density bonus of 25%. (Density limitation does not apply to hotels.)

Intensity: Two-story (30-foot) height limit and a maximum coverage of 40%. Large-scale shopping centers, gas stations, high-turnover restaurants and heavy manufacturing and industrial uses are not allowed.

Mixed Use: This designation is intended to provide a transition between commercial and residential development and to afford a pedestrian presence in adjacent commercial areas while providing neighborhood commercial services to adjacent residential areas. It is also intended to provide additional opportunities for affordable housing, especially for low and very low income households. Lastly, the Mixed Use designation is intended to recognize the continued existence of uses which contribute to the character or function of their neighborhood and allow for the possibility of their expansion. Day care facilities, fire stations, post offices, transitional housing, and emergency shelters may be allowed subject to use permit review. A residential component is required in all new development, unless an exemption is granted through use permit review. Retail uses are allowed subject to use permit approval, to ensure compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods.

Density: 12.0 residential units per acre, maximum (excluding second units). Maximum density bonus of 25%.

Intensity: Two-story (30-foot) height limit and a maximum coverage ranging from 70% to 100%, depending on specific zoning and design guidelines.

Wine Production: This designation is intended to recognize the Sebastiani Winery.

Density: Residential units, except for caretaker facilities subject to use permit approval, are not allowed.

Intensity: 35-foot height limit (excluding agricultural processing facilities, which may be higher subject to use permit review) and a maximum coverage of 70%. Wine production and related offices, wine-tasting and sales facilities are allowed.

Public Facility: This designation is intended to provide areas for

public and quasi-public facilities of all kinds, including schools, fire stations, police stations, jails, civic centers, parks, recreational facilities (including playing fields), recreational buildings, community centers, emergency housing, government offices, public parking lots, cemeteries, museums, community gardens, hospitals, and medical facilities. Except for parks and temporary activities, all uses are subject to review.

Density: Caretaker units are allowed subject to use permit approval.

Intensity: 35-foot height limit and a maximum coverage of 70%

Park: This designation is applied specifically to city parks and related facilities, including community gardens, museums and recreational facilities and buildings, as well as natural and undeveloped areas intended for walking, biking, and other low intensity recreational uses.

Density: Residential units are not allowed.

Intensity: Two-story (30-foot) height limit and a maximum coverage of 25%.

Hillside: This designation is intended to preserve Sonoma's hillside backdrop, while providing limited residential development in conjunction with agricultural uses.

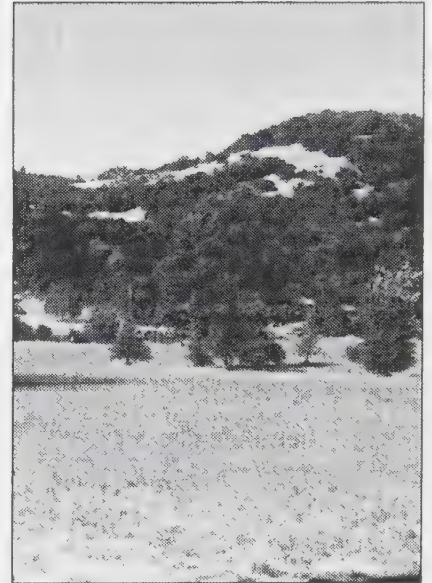
Density: 1 unit per 10 acres (excluding second units). Density bonus of 25%.

Intensity: 30-foot height limit and a maximum coverage of 20%. Crop and tree farming allowable.

Agricultural: This designation is to protect remaining tracts of productive agriculture within city limits, including grazing lands, truck farms, vineyards, and crop production.

Density: 1 unit per 10 acres (excluding second units). Density bonus of 25%.

Intensity: 30-foot height limit (excluding agricultural processing facilities, which may be higher subject to use permit review) and a maximum coverage of 30%.



Hillside Protection

Only a small portion of the hillside area is within the city's sphere of influence and subject to the Hillside land use designation. What of the rest? The preservation of the larger hillside area adjacent to Sonoma is addressed in the Environmental Resources Element. This element includes goals, policies and implementation measures for preserving vistas, preventing ridgeline development, and possibly acquiring key open space areas. Because hillside and other open space areas are largely outside of the sphere of influence, their preservation will require a cooperative effort with Sonoma County.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER ELEMENTS

The land use section of the Community Development Element is directly related to all other elements of the General Plan, as well as to its own Town Design section. To briefly sketch these connec-

tions, the land use designations and their definitions determine the nature and extent of commercial activities, in conjunction with the Local Economy Element, and provide the basis for the amount, location, and mix of future housing, in conjunction with the Housing Element. The Land Use Plan, through its sphere of influence and its park and agricultural designations, defines areas excluded from urban development, dovetailing with policies and implementation measures in the Environmental Resources Element which address the preservation of open spaces areas outside of the sphere of influence. The land use designations, as defined in this element, are themselves subject to modification by other parts of the General Plan, such as the creek protection measures set forth in the Environmental Resources Element.

The Local Economy Element

The Local Economy Element addresses issues related to land use, housing, and environmental resources. It provides policies addressing the types of businesses which will give life to the commercial land use designations set forth in the Community Development Element. By promoting the business of agriculture, the Local Economy Element works in concert with the Community Development and Environmental Resources Elements in the preservation of agricultural open space.

The Housing Element

The Housing Element provides policies and implementation measures guiding the integration of new residential development in existing neighborhoods. In addition, the Housing Element provides the policy framework for making sure that new residential developments exhibit diversity in pricing—through the requirement of inclusionary units—to complement the diversity in unit types and lot sizes promulgated in the Community Development Element. In this way, residential development of five units or more allowed through the Community Development Element contributes to Sonoma's regional fair share requirement for affordable housing, as identified in the Housing Element. The Sonoma Residential designation, through its 20% inclusionary requirement, goes even further towards meeting Housing Element objectives for affordable units.

The links between the Housing and Community Development elements are further demonstrated in the implementation of density bonuses provided for developments which include a minimum percentage of affordable units. In the Community Development Element, base densities (from which the density bonus is calculated) are established through the definitions for land use designations, and the 25% "ceiling" for density bonuses is established. In the Housing Element, the specific criteria for granting density

bonuses are set forth, including definitions of household income levels and requirements for long-term housing affordability.

The Environmental Resources Element

The goals, policies and implementation measures of the Environmental Resources Element relate to the Community Development Element on a number of levels. Specific policies or standards set forth in the element for resource protection may modify the way land designations are applied. As an example, creek setback standards apply regardless of land use designation. In order to be effectively implemented, such standards must be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance and the Town Design Guidelines, the review and development of which are mandated through the Community Development Element (see implementation measures 9 and 10).

At the site-specific level, policies and implementation measures in the Environmental Resources Element lay the basis for open space and landscaping standards applied to individual projects. The element also provides the means for implementing certain land use designations, as through hillside development regulations and open space acquisition programs. In addition, the element establishes the parkland standards used to determine when park dedications must be required of new development.

The Circulation Element

In conjunction with the Community Development Element, the Circulation Element has a major role in defining the patterns of future development through the improvement and extension of the circulation network (including traffic, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians). As one example, policy 17 of the Circulation Element calls for the continuation of the grid street system in new development. The implementation of this policy will affect the visual character of new construction, commercial and residential, as well as its integration with existing development and neighborhoods.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal CDE-1 *Establish and maintain a definitive urban boundary beyond which only uses compatible with preserving agriculture and open space resources shall be allowed.*

Policies:

1. *Annexation shall not occur outside of the designated sphere of influence.*

Planning for Eighth Street East while Protecting the Greenbelt

The proximity of Eighth Street East to the city and its importance as an employment center justify City participation in the planning of that area. However, through discussions in the General Plan study sessions, a consensus emerged against including it within the sphere of influence as that could lead to the urbanization of the rural areas separating Eighth Street East from Sonoma. In order to define a planning role for the City while protecting the greenbelt, it was agreed that Eighth Street East should be the subject of a specific plan, developed in cooperation with the City and the County. This approach, along with related policies and implementation measures, is described in the Local Economy Element of the General Plan.

2. Utility extension shall not occur outside of the sphere of influence except in cases of a public health emergency or in conformance with a specific plan developed for Eighth Street East.
3. The sphere of influence shall be fixed for the effective time frame of this General Plan (through 2005).
4. The City shall continue to coordinate planning efforts with the County to reinforce the sphere of influence and to protect adjacent agricultural land and open space.

Goal CDE-2 Strive for a balanced community (in terms of open space, developed areas, housing, local employment, and avenues of social and cultural expression) that is consistent with Sonoma's character as a small-scale country town.

Policies:

5. Growth in Sonoma shall not exceed an optimum growth rate based on the cost-effective provision of services and relative to the established urban boundary.
6. The City shall adopt development impact fees necessary to offset the costs of new development.

Goal CDE-3 Identify and implement opportunities to expand, coordinate and formalize cooperative planning efforts among the City, the County and other public agencies related to Sonoma Valley.

Policies:

7. The City shall continue to work with the County in supporting the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission to address issues of valley-wide significance.
8. The City shall continue to support a "bottom up" (i.e., based on local control rather than determined by the state) approach to regional planning issues.
9. Continue to work with the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District on developing a long-term, environmentally sensitive solution for wastewater treatment in the valley.
10. Maintain active participation and, whenever possible, direct City representation on organizations such as the school district, the Sonoma County Transportation Authority, the Open Space District, the Local Area Formation Commission, the Waste Agency and other county-wide and regional bodies.

Town Design and the Role of Town Design Guidelines

Sonomans recognize that the unique character of their community is best represented where the development of land reveals a strong relationship to historic precedent and to the natural features that frame Sonoma. This relationship is idealized in the Plaza, adjacent historic residential areas, the hillside backdrop, and the vestiges of Sonoma's agricultural heritage—these are the areas cherished by residents and visitors alike for their charm, scale, architectural variety, and views to surrounding hills and verdure. It is a pattern of development that cannot be thoughtlessly replicated without compromising the authenticity of the original, but certainly elements of "Old Sonoma" can and should be identified and transferred to new development so that the overall character of Sonoma (new and old) can be retained and, more importantly, enhanced as growth occurs.

In the 30 years since Sonoma's first general plan, maintaining small-town character has been a primary goal of the City's planning effort. However, the consensus of opinion derived from the community through the the most recent general plan revision is that contemporary development, residential and commercial, has tended to ignore the historic and natural context of Sonoma. The forces that drive development have changed dramatically since General Vallejo laid out the town. These must be acknowledged and, in some cases (e.g., the automobile), accommodated, but Sonomans are unwilling to allow these forces to erode the features of their city to the point where it loses the sense of being a special place. In a change from general plans of the past, town design is and will continue to be a focal point of City policy because of the emphasis placed on it through the community input process that was part of this revision.

As an integral part of the Community Development Element and other elements of the plan, town design goals and policies are intended to establish a basis for re-introducing the most critical elements of the historic and natural context of Sonoma into future development—but not in a manner that would create rigid or artificial stylistic restrictions. The cornerstone of this program is the call for the preparation of comprehensive town design guidelines that go beyond simply addressing architectural details. These guidelines will range in scope from large-scale community characteristics, such as street and lotting patterns and the preservation of view corridors, to issues related to individual developments, such as setbacks, building mass, and landscaping. Other topics to be addressed include street standards, creek habitat preservation and restoration, view preservation, bike and pedestrian facilities, and gateways to the city. To a great extent, these guidelines will build from the original Vallejo plan of grid streets and regular parcel divisions, with the Plaza as the town center.

Town Design Guidelines

Through discussions of the Town Design Guidelines held in the hearings on the General Plan, the following outline was developed to illustrate key areas that the guidelines could address:

1. City-wide Design Issues
 - Open space and view corridors
 - Circulation, street extensions, and street designs
 - Parks and playing fields
 - Bike and pedestrian pathway systems
2. Environmental Factors
 - Trees
 - Landscaping and landscape maintenance
 - Solar siting
 - Creeks and other wetlands
3. Neighborhood characteristics
 - Blending areas of transition
 - Major parcels
 - Street linkages
 - Densities
 - Walls, fences, and landscape screening
4. Development Elements
 - Commercial and multi-family architecture
 - Common and private open space
 - Lot sizes and mixes
 - Home sizes and mixes
 - Development styles
 - Setbacks and building mass
 - Parking standards
 - Utilities and refuse screening
5. Geographic Design Areas
 - Four Corners
 - Fifth Street East
 - Harrington area
 - Malet Street area
 - South Broadway
 - West Spain Street
 - North Sonoma Highway
 - West Napa Street and Studley Street



The concept of town design encompasses natural features, such as the pasture on Second Street East shown above, and the built environment, as exemplified by the Sebastiani Theatre, pictured below. The interface between the two is also extremely important. The horses in the field on Second Street, for example, live across the street from several condominiums. The contrast of the very rural with the very urban is part of Sonoma's unique visual character.



The Town Design map (see page 32) inventories some of the larger elements of Sonoma's visual character including areas which need special attention. These features include parks and open space, creeks and bike paths, gateways, the historic center, the Highway 12 corridor, and commercial/residential interfaces for which buffering may be required. Consistent with its Gateway Commercial designation and related policies in the Community Development Element and the Local Economy Element, the Four Corners area is highlighted as deserving of special attention in terms of design. The Town Design map is intended to serve as a starting point in identifying some of the town-scale issues to be addressed in the guidelines. Additional issues to be addressed are listed in the margin note on this page.

The creation of town design guidelines and related policies, such as a more extensive tree planting and preservation policy, are in response to the overwhelming public support given to the concept of a town design component of this General Plan, and for the application of these policies and programs to large residential projects (five or more units) and all new commercial development. Some elements of the guidelines will be suggestive, simply providing a means of generally evaluating development proposals and public initiatives. Others may be translated into specific standards and requirements, implemented through the Zoning Ordinance and other development codes. Examples include revised setback requirements and updated landscaping standards. In developing the guidelines, one of the primary challenges will be to build in adequate flexibility and leave appropriate latitude for individuals to make their own decisions with regard to the image and style of their home or business.

Historic preservation is also an important component of town design. Sonoma's identity is inextricably linked to the historic buildings that ring the Plaza and the many residences throughout the city that recall years and events gone by. The City has maintained a strong commitment to historic preservation, as exemplified by the inclusion of the Historic and Archeological Resources Element in the 1985 General Plan and the support for the creation of the Sonoma Plaza National Historic Landmark by the United States Department of the Interior. The City Council's Vision Statement recognizes the need to preserve the city's historic structures as "... vital to our economic future." The policies and programs of the Historic and Archeological Resources Element have been updated and, where necessary, modified and are included as part of the Town Design component.

Although public art has traditionally not had the same broad support as historic preservation, it is another aspect of town design and one that has already made significant contributions to the character of Sonoma (e.g., the Bear Flag statue, the map on the

Glendale Federal Building, and the mural on the north side of the Mercato, as well as the many publicly supported festivals and cultural activities held in the Plaza). Community members were in agreement that public art policies and programs should have a more prominent place in this General Plan and this direction has been followed through the goals and policies listed below.

Environmental factors are also recognized as an integral part of town design. It is anticipated that the Town Design Guidelines will address tree preservation, tree planting and other landscaping issues, creek preservation, standards for bikeways and pedestrian paths, and open space requirements. In the large scale, preservation of hillside and agricultural areas is a critical town design issue that can be addressed in part through development standards, such as the identification of view corridors and the prohibition of ridgeline construction. On a smaller scale, Town Design Guidelines should address the retention and creation of the small pockets of open space and natural areas within the community that soften its urban elements and provide respite to all of Sonoma's inhabitants, human and non-human.

Comments made through the community meeting process strongly expressed the value of a clear and comprehensive town design policy and program, not only for the way it enhances the quality of life for Sonoma residents, but also because it continues to support the local economy by insuring the protection of the very features, both built and natural, that attract people to visit and patronize local businesses. The importance of addressing community design issues in this General Plan is reflected in the presence of design-related policies in the Town Design portion of the Community Development Element as well as in the Housing, Environmental Resources and Circulation Elements. Additional background information on town design may be found in the Technical Appendix. Taken together, these statements are in response to broad public support for and a rapidly emerging commitment to a long-term, cohesive design vision for Sonoma that has previously been absent from the Sonoma General Plan.

Goal CDE-4 *Encourage quality, variety and innovation in all new development.*

Policies:

11. *Development regulations shall be modified as necessary to promote innovative design and mixed uses.*
12. *Large residential developments (five or more units) shall be subject to site planning and architectural review to ensure an appropriate level of design quality and variety of unit types.*

13. The City shall designate specific parcels and areas (see the Town Design map) where, because of size, location, development potential or other pertinent factors, coordinated design planning is needed to ensure appropriate street connections, lot patterns, and site design.

14. Development on small contiguous lots shall be coordinated to the greatest extent possible.

15. New development shall promote pedestrian and bicycle access.

Goal CDE-5 Define and reinforce the historic, small-town characteristics of Sonoma.

Goal CDE-6 Enhance Sonoma's "sense of place."

Policies:

16. Town design guidelines shall be developed to preserve and enhance the scale and heritage of the community without imposing rigid or artificial stylistic restrictions.

17. Large developments (five or more units) shall be designed to an appropriate neighborhood scale compatible with surrounding development and consistent with Sonoma's historic development patterns.

19. Design that promotes positive community interaction shall be encouraged.

20. Important scenic vistas shall be protected.

21. Historic buildings shall be preserved and reused to the greatest extent feasible.

22. The City supports higher density, infill development, provided that building mass, scale and other critical design features are compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

23. New development or redevelopment along Highway 12, including improvements in the right-of-way where appropriate, shall incorporate design features to improve pedestrian/bike access in conjunction with a consistent design theme (e.g., the landscaping and street tree improvements to Broadway between Patten Street and West Napa Street).

24. Street/bike path connections shall be redesigned to be safer, more visible, and more inviting.

25. Design guidelines for the development of "Four Corners" should

emphasize the area as a gateway and create a design focal point for lower Broadway, providing for appropriate landscaping and other treatments, as well as buffering of existing and planned residential development.

26. The following locations shall be designated as gateways and shall be developed and improved with landscaping and other improvements to clearly mark the entrances to Sonoma:
 - Broadway/Leveroni/Napa Road (Four Corners)
 - Highway 12/Verano Avenue
 - West Napa Street/Riverside Drive
 - East Napa/Sphere of Influence
 - Napa Road/Sphere of Influence
 - Leveroni Road/Sonoma Creek
27. A sign program shall be created for all public facilities, public directional signs, city limit signs and bike path/street connections.
28. New development shall, to the extent feasible and appropriate, incorporate significant natural features and views into project designs rather than separate them from the community.
29. The City shall continue to support and encourage the designation of local historic landmarks and, where feasible, develop incentives for property owners of designated landmarks.
30. The City shall maintain its working relationship with the California Archaeological Inventory at Sonoma State University in order to ensure that important archeological sites can be identified and protected.
31. Preservation of any adobe structures or portions thereof shall be required provided the preservation is consistent with applicable City building codes or when determined, to the satisfaction of the City, not to be a threat to life or property.

Goal CDE-7 Promote public art pieces and activities.

Policies:

32. Subject to the oversight of the City Council, public art shall be supported through a plan designed and administered by the Cultural and Fine Arts Commission.
33. Public art shall be consistent with the history and character of Sonoma.
34. Space for public art shall be identified through the development review process and provided in certain public improvements.

Growth Management Incentives for Affordable Housing

Related to the review of the Growth Management Ordinance called for in implementation measure CDE-4 is measure 2 of the Housing Element (see page 53). This measure requires that incentives be provided for mixed affordable/market rate developments and establishes an exemption for projects built by the City's Community Development Agency.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

The City Council, in its annual review of the General Plan, shall assign implementation priorities and responsibilities for those measures which are not already ongoing.

1. Adopt an annexation policy by ordinance which specifically defines the conditions and procedures under which annexation may be appropriate, in coordination with the Growth Management Ordinance. In developing this ordinance, consider ranking potential annexation areas according to criteria based on proximity of services; continuity of services; and potential development impacts. Adopt annexation fees commensurate with cost of providing services.
2. Continue to utilize and strengthen the County referral process in order to monitor and appropriately comment upon development applications of interest to Sonoma for properties in the unincorporated area. Support the County's policy of city-centered growth and agricultural preservation.
3. Provide continued support for and participation in the Sonoma Valley Planning Advisory Group through staff assistance and timely appointments.
4. Review the Growth Management Ordinance based on an updated, comprehensive cost/benefit analysis of anticipated new development, including consideration of the need for additional public services and infrastructure. Solicit public input early in the process to ensure that analytical assumptions reflect the community's vision for the growth of Sonoma.
5. Review community facility and impact fee ordinances to correspond to identified costs associated with new development.
6. Work with local legislators and the League of California Cities on regional governance issues to ensure an appropriate degree of local control.
7. Through the City Council consensus, communicated by its representative on the Sanitation District Board, work to provide safe, efficient, and environmentally sound sanitation service commensurate with the community's needs.
8. Where feasible and appropriate, advocate for local representation on boards, commissions, and other agencies and organizations that have county-wide or regional responsibilities which directly affect Sonoma.

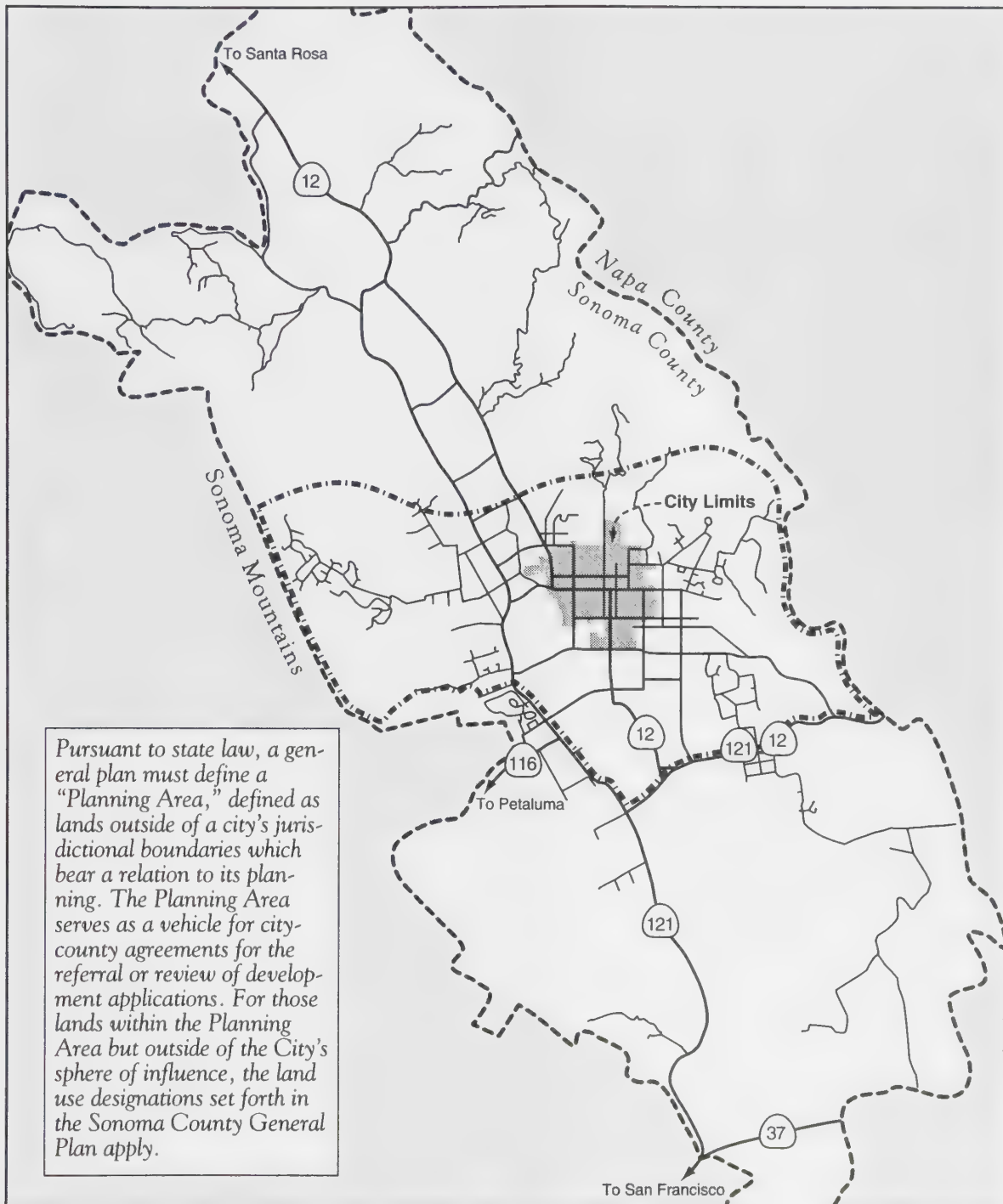
9. Revise zoning and subdivision regulations to provide greater flexibility; modify residential street standards; combine zoning, subdivision and related regulations into single development code; and ensure conformance with the provisions of the General Plan as well as directions and standards developed through the town design guidelines.
10. Develop and adopt town design guidelines, starting from the large-scale cultural and environmental features of Sonoma, and addressing residential, commercial, and specific area development, including street locations and connections, building and site design, and landscaping.
11. Establish a pre-development application review process whereby the developer and the community can discuss project characteristics prior to submittal of a formal application.
12. Include requirements within the City's revised development standards for utilizing shared driveways where appropriate and possible.
13. Include requirements within the City's revised development standards and design guidelines to require bicycle/pedestrian facilities and recycling facilities in new development and redevelopment.

A Sense of Community

One measure of a town's vitality is found in the events which bring members of the community together. Shown on the right are some snapshots of significant local gatherings, some recently instituted, others long-standing traditions:

- The upper photo catches a scene from a performance by the Avalon Players, from one of their annual productions on the grounds of the Buena Vista Winery. It is only fitting that Sonoma Valley's oldest Shakespeare company takes the stage at valley's oldest winery.
- Center, are scenes from the first annual Sonoma Valley Poetry Festival. On the left, a young woman steps up to the microphone while on the right, another reader is accompanied by a pair of musicians. In its first year, the festival attracted more than 500 participants.
- Below, some ballerinas in training participate in the annual Vintage Festival parade. The Vintage Festival, which showcases local food and wine, is attended by thousands each year.





Planning Area

- Sonoma County General Plan Area 9 (Sonoma Valley)
- City of Sonoma Planning Area Boundary



Not to Scale

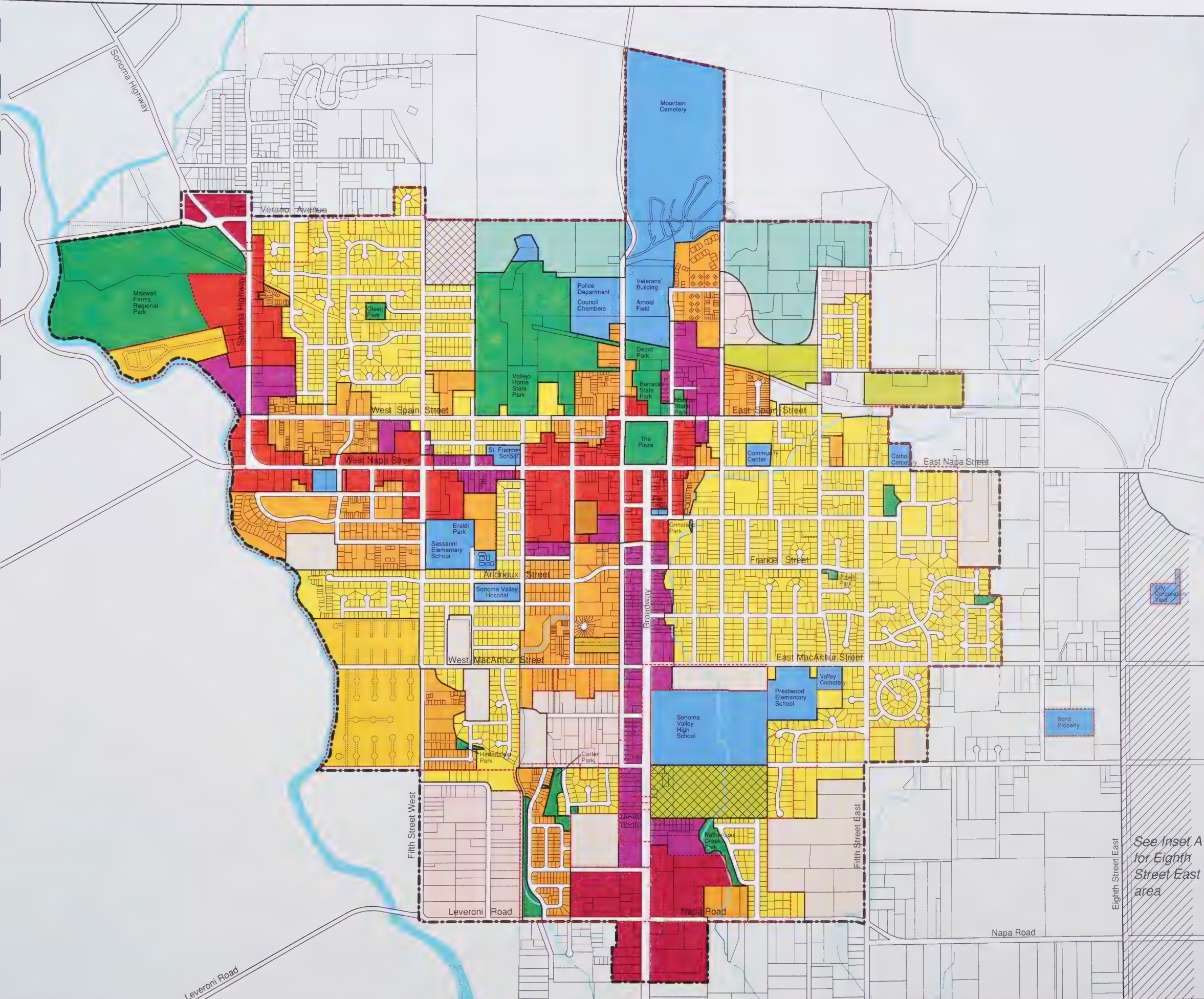
1995-2005 General Plan

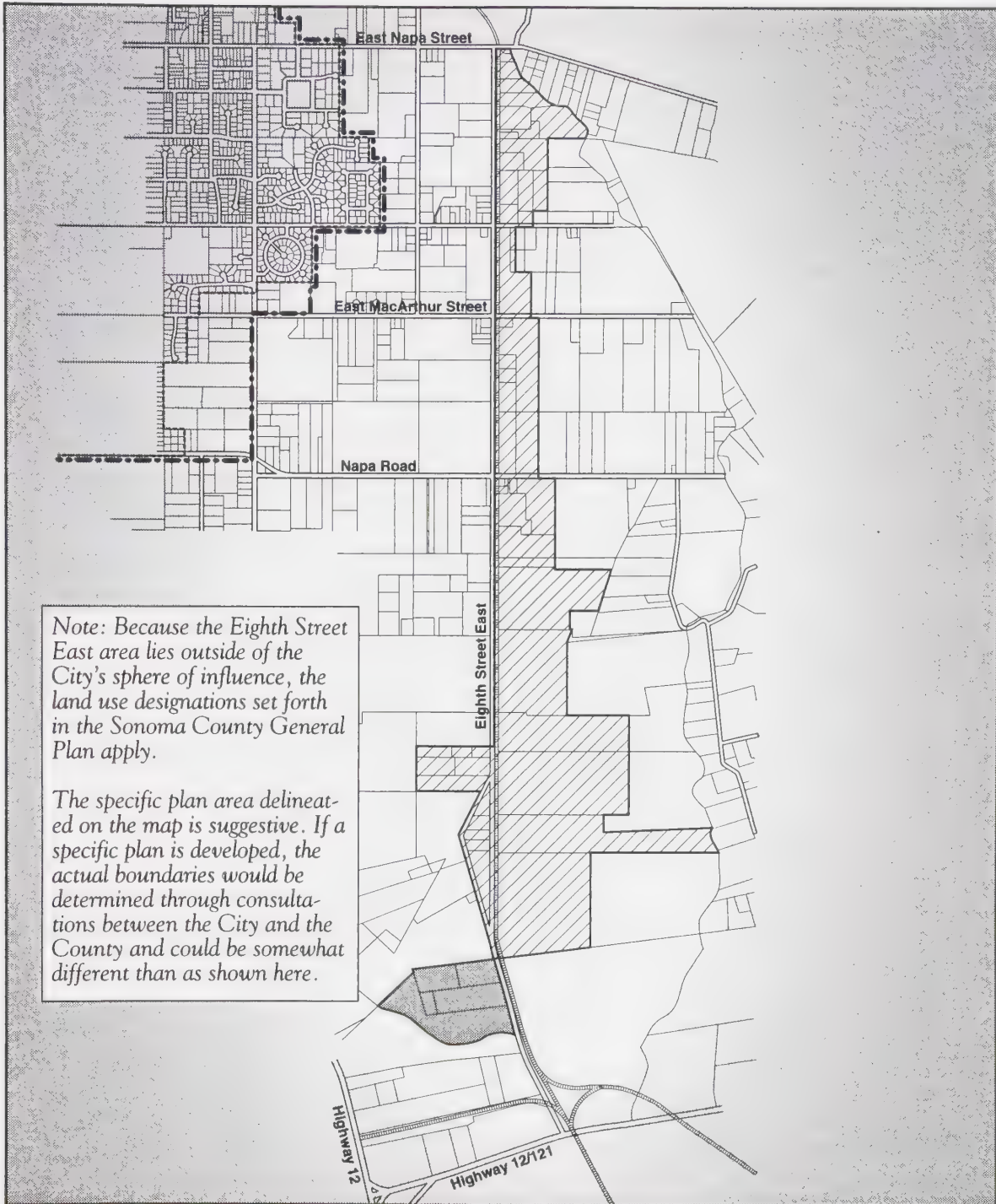
Land Use Plan

- Rural Residential (2 D.U./acre, maximum)
- Low Density Residential (2-5 D.U./acre)
- Sonoma Residential (3-8 D.U./acre)
- Medium Density Residential (6-10 D.U./acre)
- High Density Residential (9-12 D.U./acre)
- Housing Opportunity (15-20 D.U./acre)
- Mobile Home Park (7 D.U./acre, maximum)
- Mixed Use (12 D.U./acre, maximum)
- Commercial (15 D.U./acre, maximum)
- Gateway Commercial (15 D.U./acre, maximum)
- Wine Production
- Public Facility
- Park
- Hillside (1 D.U./10 acres, maximum)
- Agriculture
- Specific Plan Area
- Potential School Site
- Land Use Boundary
- City Limit
- Sphere of Influence

Note: Pursuant to State law, residential density bonuses of up to 25% of maximum base density are possible in all commercial and residential land use designations for certain types of affordable housing development.

City of Sonoma
Community Development Department





Inset A: Eighth Street East Area



Specific Plan Area



Public Facility



Not to Scale

Town Design Elements

- Open Space Areas
- Hillside Backdrop
- Scenic Corridors
- Historic Center
- Scenic Vistas
- Sonoma Creek
- Other Creeks
- Gateways
- Design Areas
- Class 1 Bike Paths
- Neighborhood Parks
- City Limit
- Sphere of Influence

City of Sonoma
Community Development Department





Local Economy Element

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan



LOCAL ECONOMY

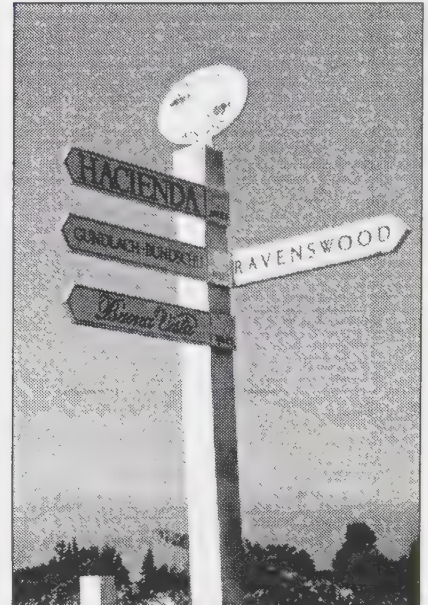
INTRODUCTION

The Local Economy Element calls for a healthy, growing economy, compatible with Sonoma's scale and character and contributing to its quality of life. In particular, the preservation and enhancement of the valley's agricultural industry is a keynote of the element. In the vision of Sonoma's future underlying the policies and programs established in the element, the valley's economy will be dominated by retail, service, and professional businesses, with agriculture as a strong and essential component, supported and enhanced by tourism. Small businesses will thrive, and established commercial centers, such as the Plaza, will be filled with pedestrians, many of whom live in or nearby the area. Eighth Street East will be developed as an agricultural production and service center, with an office/light industrial component at its southern end. Four Corners will become a new commercial area and town gateway, featuring high quality architecture, a mix of resident- and visitor-serving uses, with a strong residential presence through mixed-use development and nearby multi-family development. The town will continue to exhibit a strong sense of community, enhanced by the fact that Sonoma remains a working town, with a large proportion of residents working in the immediate area and with housing opportunities for all economic groups. Recognizing that Sonoma's economy cannot be separated from that of the larger valley, the Local Economy Element emphasizes cooperation with the County to meet its policy objectives.

COMMUNITY DIRECTIONS

The directions set forth in the Local Economy Element are derived from the many study sessions held on the General Plan revision, two of which were devoted exclusively to economic issues, and from a considerable volume of correspondence received over the course of the update. Participants in the study sessions reached a general consensus that a healthy economy is essential to Sonoma's quality of life and that economic growth should contribute to the enhancement of the community rather than be viewed as an end in itself. From that starting point, there was much discussion as to steps that could be taken to improve the business climate and to ensure that new economic development contributes to the community. The main points of agreement, which form the basis of the element's policies and implementation measures, are as follows:

- The General Plan should include an economic element, encompassing the Tourism Element in the 1985 General Plan.
- The climate for local business should be improved. Small businesses should be encouraged and local governmental regulations should be streamlined or eliminated where possible.



Agriculture plays a significant role in the local economy. Grape-growers and vintners provide numerous jobs and their vineyards and wineries greatly enhance Sonoma's attractiveness as a tourist destination, to the benefit of many businesses in the retail and service sectors.

- The relationships between tourism and agriculture should be recognized. Both of these activities should be nurtured in order to enhance the role of agriculture in Sonoma Valley and to provide a relatively clean source of economic activity.
- Sonoma should not become a bedroom community. Good jobs and housing opportunities for all income levels should be provided so that those who work in Sonoma may also live here.
- A valley-wide board should be created as a mechanism for developing and implementing economic policies on a valley-wide basis, in recognition of the inter-connections of the city and the valley, and as an advocate for business development.
- Eighth Street East should be designated as a specific plan area in order to allow comprehensive planning for its future development.

The methods by which the Local Economy Element responds to these directions are reviewed below. The creation of a local economy element in the 1995 General Plan marks a departure from the 1985 plan, in which economic issues were confined to the Tourism Element and to some general discussion in the Community Development Element. The Local Economy element provides a framework for addressing a variety of issues, as set forth above, in an integrated manner.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

It was pointed out that even if local government has little influence on general economic conditions, there are many things it can do—or refrain from doing—to improve conditions for local businesses, especially small businesses. Policies and implementation measures provided in the Local Economy Element include commitments to evaluate existing and proposed policies and ordinances for their effect on the business community and to simplify and reduce regulations where possible. As stated by one local businessman, the businesses which exist today are also Sonoma's businesses of the future.

Improving conditions for those businesses here now, as by increasing occupancy at existing hotels, may well be the most effective way of improving the local economy in general. Measures to improve business conditions include providing for mixed-use developments within and around commercial centers to ensure a pedestrian presence, encouraging ground-floor retail uses to the same end, and developing additional off-street parking in the Plaza area. Another measure proposed for the Plaza area is a program of directional signs to ensure full exposure for businesses in the area.

The element also calls for the creation of an economic development program, to be administered by the Community Development Agency.

AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM

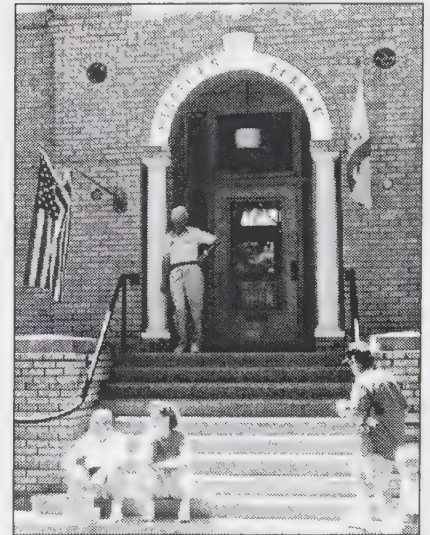
Agriculture is the valley's oldest industry and continues today as an economic mainstay. The influence of agriculture extends beyond the jobs and sales it generates to the scenic qualities enjoyed by everyone in the valley, whether connected to industry or not. The impacts of tourism are ephemeral in comparison; the visitors to Sonoma eventually return home. However, visitors to Sonoma have long-lasting impacts, especially in the many shops and restaurants which could not survive on local dollars alone, as the dollars they spend in those establishments recirculate among other businesses in the community.

Numerous policies and implementation measures are provided throughout the General Plan in support of agriculture. Those in the Local Economy Element include monitoring development applications in the unincorporated area, so that proposals inconsistent with agricultural uses may be identified and opposed. In addition, agricultural uses and activities within city limits, such as the Farmer's Market, would be encouraged. The element also supports the tourism industry, except for those activities found to be inconsistent with the town's character and history, and recognizes the critical role of the Sonoma Valley Visitor's Bureau in promoting Sonoma Valley and responding to visitor inquiries.

JOBS AND HOUSING

Sonoma is not a bedroom community, but many people have expressed the fear that the high cost of local housing will make it one. According to the 1990 census, 41% of employed residents in the city have a commute of less than 15 minutes. However, about two-thirds of all jobs in the city are in the retail and service sectors, in which wages are low relative to manufacturing and professional employment, and perhaps not adequate to obtain housing in Sonoma's high-priced market. Two main strategies are employed in the General Plan to respond to this problem: 1) encouraging the creation of higher-paying jobs; and, 2) promoting a mix of housing types, including affordable units, so that there will be opportunities for all economic segments of the community to find decent housing.

In terms of job creation, the Local Economy Element identifies Eighth Street East as a future job center which would provide employment opportunities along the lines of what already exists in that area: primarily agricultural support and production, with some office and light industrial businesses. Another area for



In 1994, the Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau responded to 31,827 walk-ins at its Plaza office and 19,018 inquiries at its south office at the Viansa Winery, up 25% from 1993. The Visitors Bureau provides information on local sights and activities, as well as accommodation referrals.



Currently, a large proportion of businesses along Eighth Street are related to agriculture, in particular the wine industry.

potential commercial development is identified at Four Corners. The element also calls for working with the Sonoma Valley Hospital to address the health needs of the community. Policies and implementation measures regarding the provision of housing are found in the Housing Element of the General Plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The city's economy is inextricably linked to that of Sonoma Valley. For example, as the commercial center of the valley, Sonoma relies on residents in the unincorporated area as consumers of products and services. The extent of this reliance is considerable, for the city represents only 21% of the valley's population. The city's tourism industry (hotels, restaurants, specialty stores, etc.) benefits greatly from the vineyards, wineries and other agricultural activities of Sonoma Valley. In recognition of these relationships, the Local Economy Element calls for the development of a valley-wide economic development plan, prepared in cooperation with the County and local businesses and organizations. Among its other purposes, the plan could be used to identify opportunities for the use of City redevelopment funds to create or promote economic development. The element also provides for the creation of an economic data base as a means of monitoring business activity.

EIGHTH STREET EAST

Eighth Street East has long been pointed to as a place for larger-scale commercial development than could be accommodated within the city or elsewhere in the valley. The City's 1985 General Plan, for example, designated large areas on Eighth Street East for office park and light industrial development. Nothing of that kind has yet materialized, however, because the deficiencies that existed there in 1985 continue to constrain development today. The lack of sewer and water infrastructure is an immediate obstacle to any intensive development, as are road and drainage improvements. The area also suffers from the geographic disadvantage, in terms of attracting some types of office park and light industrial uses, of being isolated from the Highway 101 corridor (which abounds with relatively inexpensive sites designated for light industrial).

The Local Economy element calls for the development of a specific plan to define the scope and costs of needed improvements for the Eighth Street East corridor. The focus of the plan would be the continuance and expansion of agriculturally related businesses, with some office and light industrial development in the southern area. The element also provides for the City to negotiate with the Sonoma County Water Agency to provide a water allowance for the area. While the County is ultimately responsible for processing and deciding on development applications in Eighth Street East, the Local Economy Element provides a framework for work-

ing with the County and policy direction as to the City's goals for the area.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER ELEMENTS

The Local Economy Element is related to all other General Plan elements, but its primary links are with the Community Development, Housing, and Environmental Resource elements. Additional background information on the local economy is provided in the technical appendix, along with data on land use, services, and infrastructure.

Community Development Element

In the Community Development Element, the Land Use Plan identifies areas suitable for commercial development and redevelopment through the Commercial, Gateway Commercial, and Mixed Use land use designations. In addition, the plan delineates the boundaries of a specific plan area proposed along Eighth Street East, consistent with policies and implementation measures set forth in this element which recognize the areas job-creation potential. By establishing a tight sphere of influence, the Land Use Plan helps preserve agricultural land, supporting the policies in the Local Economy Element to ensure the continued vitality of farming and related activities. Directly related to the Land Use Plan are the definitions of the land use designations, which establish density and intensity. The provision of services and infrastructure, both of which are critical to economic growth, is addressed in the Community Development Element, as are policies and implementation measures related to town design, including specific guidelines for development along Highway 12 and in the Four Corners area.

Housing Element

If Sonoma is to avoid becoming a bedroom community, suitable housing must be provided for all economic segments of the community. The provision of variety in new housing development, consistent with the character of the community, is a key theme of the Housing Element. The Housing Element also provides policies and implementation measures for the provision of housing in commercial areas and as a component of mixed use development, complementing the measures called for in the Local Economy Element to promote commercial vitality by encouraging pedestrians.

Environmental Resources Element

As expressed in Goal 1 of the Local Economy Element, economic growth should contribute to Sonoma's quality of life, not detract from it. In this regard, the preservation and enhancement of agri-

culture is recognized in both elements as critical. Complementing initiatives set forth in the Local Economy Element for the enhancement of agriculture as an industry, the Environmental Resources Element sets forth policies and implementation measures for the protection of the greenbelt and the preservation of agriculture lands. In addition, the Environmental Resources Element augments the Local Economy Element with policies and implementation measures promoting energy and water conservation, encouraging recycling, and regulating the disposal of hazardous materials.

Circulation Element

Adequate circulation is critical to the local economy. Sonoma faces unique challenges in this regard, resulting from a combination of circumstances which include its role as the commercial hub of the valley, its location along Highway 12, and its attractiveness as a tourist destination. The Circulation Element promotes a balanced transportation system, in which provisions are made to ensure adequate traffic flow while limiting the need for traffic improvements by encouraging transit, bicycling, and walking. Efforts in the Local Economy Element to increase the presence of pedestrians in the downtown and other commercial areas are supported by policies and implementation measures in the Circulation Element to improve sidewalks and add pedestrian amenities.

GOALS AND POLICIES

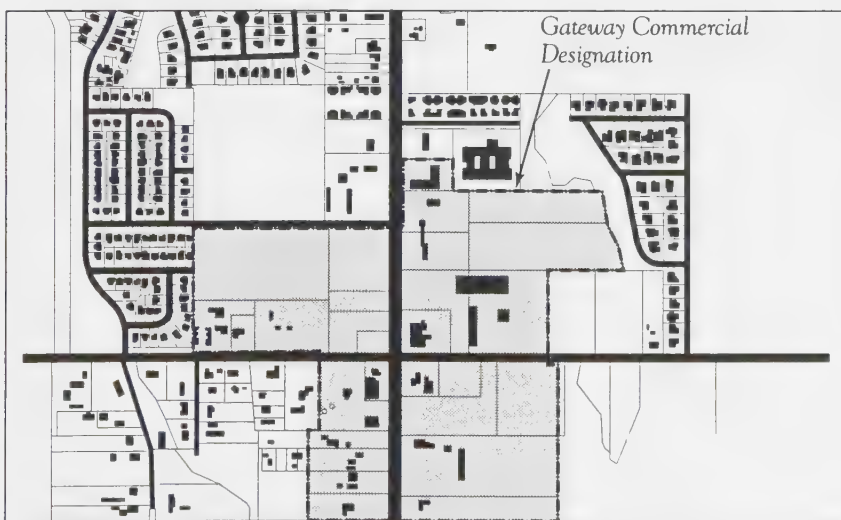
Goal LE-1 *Support and enhance the local economy consistent with Sonoma's character and in the furtherance of its quality of life.*

Policies:

1. *Mixed use development that includes small-scale, local-serving commercial uses shall be encouraged in specified residential areas, provided it is compatible with surrounding development.*
2. *The City shall work with the County and other pertinent agencies and organizations to ensure the long-term viability of the agricultural economy in Sonoma Valley.*
3. *Work with the County to promote a strong agricultural economy and prevent urban development from encroaching into agricultural areas.*
4. *The City shall participate in efforts to formulate a valley-wide economic development plan and advisory board.*
5. *The City shall continue to support measures to promote and accommodate tourism throughout the year as long as it is consis-*

tent with and does not detract from the authentic historic character of Sonoma.

6. The City shall promote efforts to develop new employment opportunities along Eighth Street East through support of a specific plan for that area.
7. The City shall support the continued production of agricultural commodities within the city limits through modified zoning and development regulations and encourage local-serving marketing opportunities.
8. Identify and pursue opportunities for economic development through the City's Community Development Agency.
9. Ensure that city regulations do not unduly burden local business operation and development.
10. Work with business and property owners to develop additional off-street parking in the Plaza area and to maximize the efficient use of existing parking.
11. Encourage a residential and pedestrian presence in commercial centers through mixed use and multi-family development.
12. Promote ground-floor retail uses in commercial areas as a means of generating pedestrian activity.
13. Establish a commercial center in the Four-Corners area, to serve the southern area of town, which provides a mix of resident and visitor-serving uses, exhibits cohesive and high-quality design, creates connections to adjacent residential areas, and includes a built-in residential component



The Four Corners area is the subject of considerable attention in the General Plan. In addition to receiving the "Gateway Commercial" land use designation, is identified in the General Plan as a gateway to the city, for which special design guidelines will ultimately be developed (see policies 25 and 26 in the Community Development Element).

14. *Support the efforts of the Sonoma Valley Hospital to respond to community needs and changes in health care.*
15. *Encourage appropriately-scaled commercial development and other services in the unincorporated communities in Sonoma Valley.*
16. *The City recognizes Eighth Street East as an important source of local jobs, and will work with the County to support its continued development in accordance with our respective General Plans.*
17. *When warranted, require economic impact assessments as part of project review.*

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

In its annual review of the General Plan, the City Council will establish implementation priorities and responsibilities for those measures which are not already on-going or in place.

1. Review and revise the Zoning Ordinance, the Sign Ordinance, and other City regulations to streamline or reduce regulation of business where feasible and to be consistent with other City policies.
2. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to establish a mixed-use district and allow for residential development in commercial districts. Establish guidelines for such development in the proposed Town Design guidelines.
3. Monitor County planning activities in order to identify and act against development proposals found to be inconsistent with agricultural uses.
4. Continue to support the activities of the Sonoma Valley Visitor's Bureau.
5. Provide staff and technical support for the development of a valley-wide economic development plan an advisory board, in conjunction with the County, local business, and other interested parties.
6. Provide staff and technical support for the development of a specific plan for Eighth Street East, in conjunction with the County and affected business and property owners. Incorporate design guidelines within the specific plan aimed at reducing impacts on adjacent agricultural lands.
7. Identify areas suitable for development with off-street parking around the Plaza. Prepare a development and acquisition plan

with funding from the City's Community Development Agency.

8. Work with the Chamber of Commerce and downtown merchants to establish a program of directional signs around the Plaza to ensure the full exposure of all its business areas.
9. In conjunction with the direction provided in the Town Design portion of the General Plan, prepare detailed design guidelines for the Four Corners area, including a circulation and access plan.
10. Establish an annexation policy for the Four Corners area to ensure integrated and orderly development.
11. Through its negotiations with the Sonoma County Water Agency, the City (in addition to meeting its own needs) shall work to obtain an adequate supply of water to serve existing and future development along Eighth Street East.
12. Develop and maintain an economic data base for Sonoma and Sonoma Valley.
13. Establish minimum content requirements for economic impact assessments and develop criteria to determine when such assessments should be required as part of the review of a project.
14. Create an economic development program to be administered by the Community Development Agency.





Housing Element

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan



HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

Community Directions

The provision of housing in Sonoma requires the balancing of sensitive and sometimes conflicting considerations. Of the many study sessions and hearings held in the course of the General Plan revision, those devoted to housing issues engendered the most emotion and debate. Yet, out of those hearings, a sense of community prevailed and common directions emerged. It is on these shared goals and values that the Housing Element is based. The basic themes sounded throughout the community meeting process were as follows:

- There should be a variety of housing provided in Sonoma, consistent with its historical and small-town character, and this variety should be reflected within individual developments.
- Innovation in design, ownership, and living arrangements should be encouraged in residential development and redevelopment, using town design guidelines to achieve this intent.
- The unique qualities of Sonoma's architecture and the integrity of its neighborhoods should be respected and emulated in new development.
- Those who work in Sonoma should be able to live here. Sonoma should not become a bedroom community.
- Sonoma's existing housing assets—its neighborhoods, architecture, and affordable housing stock—should be preserved and enhanced.

Further guidance in the development of the Housing Element, and throughout the General Plan update, was obtained from the City Council's vision statement. This statement embodies many of the comments made at the public hearings, including the commitment to provide housing opportunities for those who work in the community. Another concept endorsed in the Vision Statement relevant to the Housing Element is the idea of "town-centered" development, an end which is achieved through policies and implementation measures encouraging mixed-use development and the placement of higher density residential development adjacent to commercial centers. But perhaps the most important expression in the vision statement regarding housing is that the town "... is a rural community of diverse character" The ideal of diversity, discussed further in the following section, is a critical aspect of the Housing Element.

State Requirements for Housing Elements

The legal mandates pertaining to housing elements are found under article 6 of the Planning and Zoning Law (Title 7 of the California Government Code). Although the housing element law runs to nearly 14 pages, the main requirements, in terms of content, may be summarized as follows:

- 1) An identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs
- 2) Goals, policies and quantified objectives for meeting housing needs of all incomes
- 3) The provision of sites adequate to address the existing and projected housing needs of the community
- 4) A five-year action program which will:
 - Identify adequate sites for fair-share housing needs (including homeless)
 - Assist in meeting needs for low/moderate income households
 - Address governmental constraints
 - Conserve and improve the existing stock of affordable units.
 - Promote equal housing opportunities
 - Preserve existing assisted housing developments

These requirements are described more fully in the technical appendix of the General Plan, under "Housing Issues."



Housing Diversity

Sonoma's housing stock runs the gamut from historic estate homes, to modern suburban residences, to attached affordable units.

Ensuring Diversity

Sonoma's "diverse character" contains a mosaic of housing types, comprised of historic mansions, garden apartments for seniors, single-family neighborhoods arranged on the classic street grid, spacious mobile home parks, P.U.D.s designed to preserve trees and creeks, mixed-use developments, and affordable housing for first-time home buyers. There is room within this diversity for many types of housing and desire within the community to encourage new varieties, such as co-housing and shared housing. Recent residential developments have had too much repetition and too little variety.

The revised Housing Element responds to this call for diversity in its first goal, and follows up with an array of policies and implementation programs. Notable measures include the requirement that all new development of five or more units provide an affordable housing component, that town design guidelines be developed, and that modifications be made to the Zoning Ordinance to promote flexibility in design and ownership arrangements. There would also be opportunities for diversity throughout Sonoma, with areas designated for mixed-use development within and adjacent to commercial centers and lands designated for multi-family development.

Another method of assuring diversity in new housing development is the "Sonoma Residential" land use designation, established through the Community Development Element. This designation mandates a 20% affordable housing component (10% affordable to moderate income households and 10% affordable to low income households) in all new development. Equally important, the designation requires that new development exhibit variety in lot sizes and housing types while responding to neighborhood conditions.

Respecting Town and Neighborhood Context

Along with the idea of diversity, there was general agreement expressed in the study sessions that new residential development should conform with the historic and small-town character of Sonoma and should respect the qualities and context of the neighborhood in which it is built. This concept is expressed in the Housing Element's second goal and is the driving force behind numerous policies and implementation measures. The proposed town design guidelines (see page 21 of the Community Development Element) are a key method by which the balance between diversity and neighborhood context will be defined.

Ultimately, the town design guidelines will be a bridge connecting policies in the General Plan with the review of individual projects.

Other policies and implementation measures encourage neighborhood participation throughout the project planning and design process and prohibit office and commercial uses in designated multi-family areas. Further discussion in this regard, along with additional goals, policies, and implementation measures, is provided in the town design section of the Community Development Element.

Providing Housing Opportunities

The community of Sonoma is committed to providing housing opportunities for its workers and its residents. Right now, a large proportion of Sonoma residents work in and around town. According to the 1990 census, 51% of the employed population had a commute of 15 minutes or less. This is a long-standing feature of Sonoma life, treasured by its residents because it leads to a greater sense of community. Great concern was expressed in the General Plan study sessions toward the idea of Sonoma becoming a bedroom community, where residents are disconnected from the working life of the town and where their children are priced out of the local housing market. The prospect is real in that increasing land values and housing prices are quickly reducing home ownership opportunities for middle and lower income households.

In part, the policies and programs requiring variety in new housing development will provide a wider range of housing opportunities for different income levels. But additional measures are needed. The Housing Element requires that each new development of five or more units designate 10% of its units as low or moderate income housing. This across-the-board inclusionary requirement is expanded in the Sonoma Residential land use designation, which mandates a 20% affordable component in new development of five units or more, with 10% affordable to moderate income households and 10% affordable to low income households. The requirement of inclusionary units affordable to moderate and low income households allows the City to leverage other incentive programs, such as fee waivers, to make such units even more affordable. In that way, moderate income units provided through the inclusionary requirement could be made affordable to low income households, and low income units could be made affordable to very low income households.

With some modifications, the element retains existing programs and policies which have resulted in quality affordable homes, including the density bonus program, Growth Management Ordinance incentives for projects which provide affordable units, and the waiver of building permit and impact fees for affordable units. The Sonoma Community Development Agency will continue and expand its housing programs, consistent with the state requirement that 20% of the agency's funding be devoted to the

Density Bonuses

Like an inclusionary requirement, a density bonus is a program used to develop affordable housing. A density bonus provides a developer additional or "bonus" density (i.e., more units) over and above the basic density allowed by the General Plan and zoning regulations.

Increasing the number of units on the property reduces the overall cost of developing each unit and allows the units to be sold or rented at more affordable prices. State law requires that a density bonus of at least 25%, and at least one additional incentive, be granted to a developer if a particular development makes a minimum of 20% of its units affordable to lower income households.

This means, for example, that a development on a one acre parcel of land with a base density of 12 units per acre could develop up to 15 units on that property. Unlike inclusionary requirements, density bonuses are mandated by state law (See Title 7, section 65915 (a), California Government Code.)

Inclusionary Requirements

An inclusionary requirement mandates that a certain percentage of units in any new development (larger than a specified threshold) be designated as affordable. Such programs are not specifically required by state law, but they may be adopted at the local level as a means of providing affordable housing.

Through implementation measure HE-1, Sonoma's Housing Element requires that 10% of the homes in developments of five units or more be set aside for low or moderate income households. Developments subject to the Sonoma Residential land use designation must set aside an additional 10% of all units to low income households (see page 13 of the Community Development Element).

It is anticipated that the inclusionary requirements applied across the board to all developments of five or more units and through the Sonoma Residential designation will provide opportunities for the City to provide additional incentives, such as the waiver of building permit and other development fees, to make such units even more affordable (i.e., to low or very low income households).

provision of low and moderate income housing. As yet another means of promoting varied housing opportunities, properties developed under the Mixed Use land use designation are required to include a housing component, unless specifically exempted by the Planning Commission. This designation is intended to provide housing opportunities for low and very low income households through the creation of rental units.

Preserving Housing Assets

Sonoma's richness in history and natural features is reflected in its housing stock. The town's three major mobile home parks, for example, are extensively landscaped and provide their residents with substantial amounts of open space. At the same time, they represent 487 units of moderate-density, affordable housing, the largest stock of affordable housing in the community. Elsewhere, there are single-family neighborhoods laid out along grid streets, with homes dating back to the founding of the town. Another neighborhood is composed of tract bungalows originally developed in the 20's and 30's by the Sebastiani Winery to house its workers. There are also neighborhoods of condominiums and clustered housing, and of single-family homes along curvilinear streets. All are different, but each has distinct characteristics which make it a neighborhood. Sonoma's neighborhoods have many qualities worthy of preservation, including their history, architecture, affordability, and environmental features.

The importance of preserving existing neighborhoods and housing is expressed in Goal 2 of the Housing Element. Supporting policies and implementation measures include the development of town design guidelines, the preservation of historically and architecturally important structures, and the solicitation of neighborhood participation throughout the planning and design review process. The element also incorporates recent actions by the City Council to regulate rents within the city's mobile home parks and establish a rehabilitation program for mobile home units. Also, the conversion of rental units to condominiums will be restricted. The Mixed Use land use designation, as set forth in the Community Development Element, encourages the preservation of existing housing through the concept of retained uses. Under this designation, uses which in other circumstances might be considered non-conforming, would be preserved.

Responding to State Requirements

Sonoma recognizes its state-mandated obligation to make a good faith effort to provide its fair share of housing, including housing units affordable to very low, low, and moderate income households. Every housing element must reflect the desires of the local community and meet the mandates imposed by state law, of which

the “fair share” requirement is the centerpiece. Pursuant to state law, these allocations are assigned to each community by its local Council of Governments (COG). Sonoma’s local Council of Governments is the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG).

**Fair Share Objectives and Projected Housing Development
by Income Categories, 1988-1995**

	<u>Very Low</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Above Moderate</u>
City of Sonoma Fair Share Projected Housing Need:¹	170	113	132	215
Units built since 1988 through affordable programs:	34	53	47	n.a.
Non-program units built since 1988: ²	1	55	80	315
Program units approved since 1988:	6	67	29	0
Affordables due to revert to market rate:	0	0	11	n.a.
Estimated Need:³	129	0	0	0

1. ABAG, *Housing Needs Determinations*, 1989 (includes existing unmet need as of 1988, need from 1988 to 1990, and need from 1990 to 1995).
2. “Non-program” units are housing units built without the use of incentive programs and are not subject to City contracts or restriction in terms of sales price, rent, or household income.
3. Assigned fair share minus units already built or approved, plus the amount of existing affordables due to revert to market rate by the end of 1995.

Source: Community Development Department/
Association of Bay Area Governments

Table 5

As summarized in Table 5, the city’s regional fair share allocation for 1988-1995, as identified in ABAG’s 1989 *Housing Needs Determinations*, totals 630 units, including 415 units affordable to households of moderate income or less, and 215 units for those of above-moderate income. In determining progress toward meeting Sonoma’s fair share objectives for each income category, both units developed through housing programs (such as the density bonus program) and units developed without the use of incentives (such as apartments and duplexes) are counted. However, in order to count any unit as being affordable to moderate income, low

Income Levels

Four levels of household income, defined by state law, are used to determine housing affordability: Very Low Income, Low Income, Moderate Income, and Above Moderate Income. Based on the median income of a household of four in 1995, they are defined as follows:

Very Low: 0-\$24,200
(0-50% of Median)

Low: \$24,201-\$38,700
(51-80% of Median)

Moderate: \$38,701-\$58,100
(81-120% of Median)

**Above
Moderate:** \$58,100+
(121% and Above)

These categories are used to identify and meet various housing goals in terms of affordability. According to ABAG’s 1989 *Housing Needs Determinations*, 30% of Sonoma’s households are in the very low income category, 18% are in the low income category, 19% are in the moderate income category, and 33% are in the above-moderate category.

income, or very low income households, its sales price or rent must be verified. Through a sales price and rent survey of housing units built since 1988, the City identified one very low income unit, fifty-five low income rental units and eighty moderate income rental units developed without the benefit of density bonuses or other affordable housing programs. Such units, which are referred to in Table 5 as "non-program units," are not subject to restrictions on affordability or household income.

While the City may exceed its allocation for low income units by as much as 55% and its allocation for moderate income units by as much as 10%, it is expected that only 24% of its allocation for very low income units will be constructed. In Sonoma's expensive housing market, units for very low income households are difficult to provide. In addition, many of the new programs called for in the Housing Element will not be in effect until the close of the allocation period (which ends in 1995). Although their short-term impact may be limited, these programs are expected to produce significant numbers of affordable units through the life of the General Plan.

In addition to addressing the regional fair share allocation, the Housing Element, by state law, must provide quantified estimates of the number of units in each income category which will be developed, preserved, or rehabilitated over a five-year planning period. This planning period, which runs from 1995 through the year 2000, should not be confused with the period used in the fair share allocations (1988-1995). The estimates for the five-year program are assigned to individual implementation measures as appropriate and are summarized in table 6 (see page 58). Other state requirements addressed in policies and implementation measures include fair housing practices, the provision of emergency shelters and transitional housing, and the preservation or replacement of at-risk affordable units.

The goals, policies and implementation measures set forth below are designed to bring together the common principles expressed by the community and provide the means for the attainment of local objectives and state mandates in accordance with Housing Element law. The technical appendix to the element provides supplemental information on population, housing, and infrastructure conditions within Sonoma as well as a discussion of related housing topics as required by statute.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER ELEMENTS

The Community Development Element

Of all the other General Plan elements, the Housing Element is most closely related to the Community Development Element. In

many instances, policy directions set forth in the Housing Element are carried out by the Community Development Element, either through the Land Use Plan and land use designations or through implementation measures. Through the Land Use Plan and the land use definitions, areas available for residential development are designated, along with the range of allowable densities and direction on appropriate housing types, thereby laying the foundation for all other goals, policies, and programs related to the provision of housing. In some cases, land use designations implement housing programs, as is the case with the Sonoma Residential designation with its special inclusionary requirement for low and moderate income units. The Land Use Plan and the Housing Element are also coordinated to achieve community planning objectives such as limiting the area of annexation, providing a pedestrian (i.e., residential) presence in commercial areas, and locating higher density and mixed use development near commercial centers.

See pages 13-17 of the Community Development Element for the complete definitions of the General Plan land use designations.

The Community Development Element also provides the means of implementing the many Housing Element policies aimed at providing diversity in housing types while respecting neighborhood conditions. These policies will largely be promulgated through the Town Design guidelines, the development of which is required by implementation measure CDE-10. The Sonoma Residential and the Mixed Use land use designations also work toward promoting housing diversity. Another key implementation measure found in the Community Development Element is the review of the Growth Management Ordinance (measure CDE-4). While the Growth Management Ordinance (GMO) limits the rate of residential development, in keeping with constraints on services and infrastructure and with community expectations, the GMO may also be used as a powerful incentive for the provision of affordable housing. Implementation measure 2 of the Housing Element requires that incentives for the development of affordable housing be built in to the review of the Growth Management Ordinance required through the Community Development Element.

The Local Economy Element

The Housing Element and the Local Economy Element are designed to work together toward fulfilling the call in the City Council's vision statement for "... a community where those who live in Sonoma are able to work in Sonoma." The Housing Element responds to that call through policies and implementation measures which ensure a variety of housing types in new residential development and which provide programs and incentives for the creation of housing units affordable to all economic segments of the community. In addition, policies and implementation measures in the Housing Element dovetail with those in the Local Economy element related toward encouraging mixed-use development and assuring a pedestrian presence in commercial areas.



Pockets of Open Space

It is especially important to provide open space amenities in higher density projects, such as was done in the affordable Casa Primera development with this play area.

The Environmental Resources Element

The Environmental Resources Element and the Housing Element are designed to complement one another. While the Housing Element describes where new residential development should be located and what qualities it should possess, the Environmental Resources Element proscribes development in sensitive areas, such as ridgelines and riparian corridors, and strictly limits it in others, such as on hillsides. While the Housing Element focuses higher density residential development near commercial areas, the Environmental Resources Element works to limit the city's annexation area and protect Sonoma's greenbelt. Taken together, these policies reduce car trips and promote walking and bicycling.

The Environmental Resources Element provides the policy basis for open space and landscaping requirements in new development and overall community parkland standards. In addition, policies for the protection of creeks and other natural resources will be reflected in residential site plans that respond to and preserve environmental resources. Finally, energy conservation policies and programs in the Housing Element will help conserve natural resources as called for in the Environmental Resources Element. The two elements are designed to work together to result in housing which is properly located, environmentally sensitive, well-landscaped, and desirable.

The Circulation Element

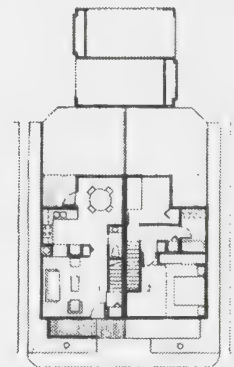
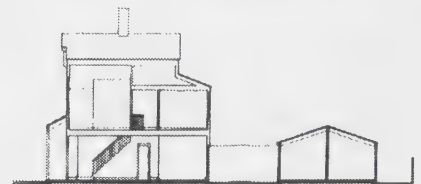
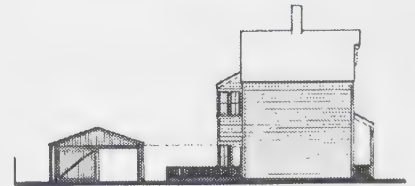
By concentrating higher density residential development adjacent to commercial centers and encouraging mixed use developments, the Housing Element furthers policies in the Circulation Element which call for reducing automobile dependence and promoting transit, walking, and bicycling. On the large scale, the overall pattern of new residential development will be governed by policy 17 of the Circulation Element, which calls for the continuance of the city's traditional grid street system, in accordance with the City Council's vision statement. On a smaller scale, individual residential developments will be required to provide bike racks and, when applicable, bicycle and pedestrian pathways, in accordance with Circulation Element policies and implementation measures. In addition, new residential development will be subject to impact fees used to fund circulation improvements necessitated by growth.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal HE-1 *Provide a mix of housing types affordable to all income levels, consistent with community and regional needs.*

Policies:

1. The growth management ordinance shall promote a mix of housing for all income levels.
2. A variety of unit types, to the extent compatible with existing neighborhood conditions, shall be encouraged within new developments.
3. The City recognizes that higher densities are necessary for the provision of affordable housing, and will support higher density development consistent with the policies and programs of this General Plan through the Medium Density, High Density, Housing Opportunity, and Mixed Use land use designations.
4. The City shall continue to encourage the development of housing that meets identified local needs.
5. The City shall work cooperatively with the County and other applicable agencies to address valley-wide special housing needs, such as housing for farm workers, the homeless, and housing for crisis situations.
6. Innovative site planning, housing design, and living arrangements (e.g., co-housing, shared housing, live/work spaces) are encouraged as a means of promoting affordability and livability.
7. The City supports increased housing opportunities in and around the Plaza, and in other designated commercial and mixed use areas.
8. Second units separate from or attached to existing housing are encouraged.
9. Density bonuses and other incentives shall be provided to developers of affordable housing based on their ability to satisfy specific housing needs.
10. Equality of housing opportunities shall be promoted.
11. Future General Plan amendments shall be evaluated with regard to their consistency with this element and with their effect on the City's ability to meet identified housing needs.
12. The City will continue to work in partnership with private developers and non-profit housing corporations for the provision of affordable housing as a means of maximizing City housing resources.



Design Sensitivity

The architecture of this typical duplex unit in the affordable Sonoma Commons development was produced through a design competition intended to ensure that the project design emulated traditional characteristics of older development in Sonoma.

Goal HE-2 *Protect and conserve the existing housing stock and ensure that new residential development is consistent with Sonoma's town character and with neighborhood conditions.*

Policies:

13. *The City shall support efforts to identify and preserve important examples of historic or architecturally significant residences.*
14. *The City shall encourage seismic bracing and other measures to protect existing housing of all types from the effects of earthquakes.*
15. *Conversion of existing apartment complexes to condominiums shall be restricted depending on the overall rental vacancy rate and the availability of units of similar type and rent.*
16. *The City shall support the preservation of mobile-home parks as an important source of affordable housing.*
17. *Rehabilitation or remodeling of older cottages and bungalows shall conform to the scale of the immediate neighborhood and conserve the architectural character and integrity of the original structure.*
18. *The City shall encourage property owners to retrofit existing housing with energy and water conservation features and appliances.*
19. *The City shall support the rehabilitation and continued residential use of housing that is technically non-conforming due to the land use designation and zoning on the property.*
20. *New residential development of five units or more shall be subject to architectural guidelines to ensure compatibility with the qualities and character of neighboring development.*
21. *Neighborhood participation in the site planning and design of residential developments shall be encouraged, within the defined guidelines of the Zoning Ordinance.*

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

The following implementation measures are intended to be put into effect within the next five years, unless otherwise specified. Quantified estimates as to the number units developed or conserved through these measures over a five period are provided when applicable. Table 6, on page 58, identifies, by income level, the estimated number of housing units developed or conserved through the action program.

1. Require that all developments of five or more units designate 10% of the total number of units in the development as affordable to low or moderate income households.

Responsibility: Community Development Department, City Council.

Target Date: October, 1994.

Units Built: 10 affordable units and 179 market-rate units over 5-year period.

2. In the review and update of the Growth Management Ordinance (see implementation measure CDE-4), incorporate incentives for mixed market-rate/affordable residential developments which provide affordable housing beyond the mandated inclusionary component. Affordable residential developments planned, funded, constructed and administered by the City through the Community Development Agency shall be exempt from growth management processing restrictions.

Responsibility: Community Development Department.

Target Date: December, 1995.

Units Provided: 35 affordable units provided over 5-year period.

3. Amend the Zoning Ordinance Map to designate zones of single-family, multi-family, and mixed use development, consistent with the General Plan Land Use Map.

Responsibility: Community Development Department, City Council, Planning Commission.

Target Date: December, 1995.

Units Provided: Not Applicable.

4. Review and revise the Zoning Ordinance as necessary to encourage and provide for flexibility and variety in housing design, ownership, and living arrangements, including co-housing and shared housing.

Responsibility: Community Development Department, City Council, Planning Commission.

Target Date: December, 1995.

Units Provided: Not Applicable.

5. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow duplexes in the Low Density Residential zone, subject to use permit review.

Responsibility: Community Development Department, City Council, Planning Commission.

Target Date: December, 1995.

Units Provided: 18 affordable units over 5-year period.

6. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to eliminate office and retail uses as being conditionally allowed in the Medium Density and High Density zones.

Responsibility: Community Development Department,
City Council, Planning Commission.
Target Date: December, 1995.
Units Conserved: Not applicable.

7. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to add emergency shelters as a conditionally allowed use in the public and commercial zones; add transitional housing as a conditionally allowed use in specified residential zones.

Responsibility: Community Development Department,
City Council, Planning Commission.
Target Date: December, 1995.
Units Provided: 4-10 shelter beds within 5 years.

8. Work with Sonoma County and with Friends in Sonoma Helping (FISH) to establish an emergency shelter and accompanying management program in Sonoma Valley.

Responsibility: Community Development Department,
City Council
Target Date: January, 1997.
Units Provided: (See estimate for measure 7.)

9. Investigate the feasibility of entering into a referral arrangement with COTS (Committee on the Shelterless) of Petaluma or some other similar agency in exchange for funding support, until local shelter facilities are developed.

Responsibility: Community Development Department,
City Council
Target Date: November, 1995.
Units Provided: Not Applicable.

10. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to remove the age and affordability restrictions in the second unit ordinance.

Responsibility: Community Development Department,
City Council, Planning Commission.
Target Date: February 1995.
Units Provided: 12 affordable units over 5-year period.

11. Work with Sonoma County, local farmers, and farmworker organizations to investigate the need for farmworker housing in Sonoma Valley and develop a program for providing it accordingly.

Responsibility: Community Development Department, City Council.

Target Date: December, 1995 (complete study).

Units Provided: Unknown.

12. Establish an ordinance providing for density bonuses of no more than 25%, consistent with state law.

Responsibility: Community Development Department, City Council, Planning Commission.

Target Date: December, 1995.

Units Provided: 30 affordable units over 5-year period.

13. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to establish both minimum and maximum density standards in each residential zoning district for new development.

Responsibility: Community Development Department, City Council, Planning Commission.

Target Date: December, 1995.

Units Provided: Not applicable.

14. Implement the mobile home rent control ordinance.

Responsibility: Community Development Department, Mobile Home Rent Control Board.

Target Date: Ongoing.

Units Conserved: 170 conserved as affordable housing over 5-year period.

15. Support the continued implementation of the mobile home rehabilitation program.

Responsibility: Community Development Department in conjunction with the Sonoma County Community Development Commission.

Target Date: Ongoing.

Units Rehabilitated: 30 units rehabilitated over 5-year period.

16. Continue to aggressively seek available grant funding for affordable housing development, rehabilitation, and loans for first-time home-buyers.

Responsibility: Community Development Department, City Council, CDA.

Target Date: Ongoing.

Units Provided: Unknown (dependent upon grant availability.)

17. Continue to use the Community Development Agency (CDA)

and its 20% affordable housing fund for the provision, preservation, and rehabilitation of affordable housing.

Responsibility: Community Development Department, CDA

Target Date: Ongoing.

Units Provided: 35 affordable units over 5-year period.

18. Establish and administer fair housing policies in all housing developments in which the City participates.

Responsibility: Community Development Department, Sonoma Community Housing Corp.

Target Date: December, 1995.

Units Provided: Not Applicable.

19. Use the waiver of building permit and impact fees as an incentive for the development of affordable housing units.

Responsibility: CDA (funding source).

Target Date: Ongoing.

Units Assisted: 83 assisted over 5 year period.

20. Maintain an up-to-date inventory of vacant and under-utilized parcels within the city and its sphere of influence.

Responsibility: Community Development Department.

Target Date: Ongoing.

Units Provided: Not Applicable.

21. Develop an ordinance restricting the conversion of rental housing developments of five or more units into condominiums.

Responsibility: Community Development Department, City Council.

Target Date: December, 1995.

Units Conserved: Unknown.

22. Monitor at-risk affordable units and establish a program for their preservation or replacement.

Responsibility: Community Development Department, City Council, CDA.

Target Date: December, 1995 (study completed).

Units Preserved: 12 affordable units replaced or preserved during 5-year period.

23. Conduct a review of development procedures, regulations, and fees with the intent of eliminating or streamlining require-

ments when feasible and consistent with other adopted City policies.

Responsibility: Community Development Department,
City Council, CDA.

Target Date: December, 1995 (study completed).

Units Provided: Not applicable.

24. Implement standards for energy and water conservation in all new development.

Responsibility: Community Development Department.

Target Date: Ongoing.

Units Provided: Not applicable.

25. Monitor the development of affordable units within Sonoma, whether produced through City programs or created by the housing market without the use of incentives or mandates.

Responsibility: Community Development Department.

Target Date: Ongoing.

Units Provided: Not applicable.

26. Disseminate information on fair housing laws and refer housing discrimination complaints to the State Department of Fair Employment and Housing or the Sonoma County Rental Information and Mediation Service, as applicable.

Responsibility: Community Development Department.

Target Date: Ongoing.

Units Provided: Not applicable.

27. Develop and implement a program to monitor the impact of the Growth Management Ordinance on the cost-effective provision of housing and pursue modifications to the ordinance necessary to avoid or minimize such impacts.

Responsibility: Community Development Department.

Target Date: Complete first report by September 1, 1996 and annually thereafter.

Units Provided: Not applicable.

28. Report to the City Council annually on progress in meeting the City's housing goals.

Responsibility: Community Development Department.

Target Date: January of each year.

Units Provided: Not applicable.

The accompanying table summarizes the estimated units produced through Housing Element implementation measures by income category, as well as estimates of replacement units, shelter beds, and units conserved.

Housing Element Program Objectives Five-year Action Plan: 1995-2000				
<u>Program</u>	<u>Very Low</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Above Moderate</u>
Inclusionary Requirement (Program 1):	0	0	10	0
Sonoma Residential Inclusionary: ¹	0	20	20	159
Affordable exemption in GMO ² (Program 2):	0	15	20	35
Duplexes in the R-1 zone (Program 5):	0	0	18	0
Second Unit Ordinance (Program 10):	0	12	0	0
Density Bonus Program (Program 12):	0	10	20	0
Community Development Agency (Program 17):	15	20	0	0
Total New Units:	15	77	88	194
Total Replacement Units:	0	0	12	0
Total New Shelter Beds:	4-10			
Total Units Conserved:	0	0	182	10
.....				
1. See the definition of the Sonoma Residential land use designation on page 13 of the Community Development Element.				
2. Assuming an exemption is provided for mixed market-rate/affordable developments.				

Source: Community Development Department

Table 6



Environmental Resources Element

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan



ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

The Environmental Resources Element addresses two state-mandated elements, open space and conservation, and an optional topic, recreation. The issues associated with open space, conservation and recreation are integrated and, as such, have been included in one section of the General Plan. The following themes were expressed during the General Plan study sessions devoted to environmental issues:

- The sphere of influence should be defined by surrounding open space.
- The protection and provision of open space should be an integral part of Sonoma's design.
- Open space areas should be accessible and should be linked with trails and bikepaths.
- Environmental education should be addressed.
- An environmental inventory is needed to properly assess Sonoma's environmental resources.

Additional guidance in the development of the Environmental Resources Element was derived from the City Council's Vision Statement. The Council's Vision Statement contains many references to Sonoma's natural environment, including "... the backdrop of the hills and agricultural lands of the historic Valley of the Moon," "... a community surrounded by viable agriculture and permanent open space," and "The balance among agriculture, open space and environmental resources ... will be the key to a well-planned, vital and unified community." Of particular importance is an expression which summarizes a common view regarding Sonoma's environment: "We recognize that preservation and enhancement of our natural environment is vital to our well being and that of our children." This statement provides the thread for the development of goals, policies and implementation measures in the Environmental Resources Element.

Greenbelt

Sonoma is fortunate in that the hills and adjacent agriculture provide a natural greenbelt. This greenbelt not only serves as a visual amenity but plays an important role in defining Sonoma's character. Sonoma is defined, in part, as having small town charm; this is largely due to the physical boundaries of the nearby hillsides and agriculture in addition to the creeks, riparian corridors and parks that comprise the natural environment.

State Requirements:

- 1) A Conservation Element for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources . . .
- 2) An Open Space Element . . . for the comprehensive and long-range preservation and conservation of the following types of open-space land:
 - Open space for the preservation of natural resources
 - Open space used for the managed production of resources
 - Open space for outdoor recreation
 - Open space for public health and safety
- 3) An action program, including specific programs which the legislative body intends to pursue.

(See Title 7, sections 65302 (c) and 65563, California Government Code.)



Maxwell Farms Regional Park, part of Sonoma's greenbelt, provides playing fields, childrens' play equipment, and natural areas.

There was general agreement expressed at the study sessions that the sphere of influence should be reduced from that in the 1985 General Plan and that the city should be delineated by surrounding open space. These concepts are embodied in the two Environmental Resource goals, both of which focus on preservation and enhancement of open space and significant environmental resources, including hillsides and land in and around Sonoma currently in agricultural use. Specifically, a policy has been developed to work with the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission, and other organizations to ensure the protection of the agricultural greenbelt surrounding Sonoma.

Other policies and implementation measures have been included in the General Plan that support open space and agriculture and regulate hillside development—means by which the long-term preservation of those components that make up the greenbelt is accomplished.

Open Space

The term "open space" includes a variety of land categories. In Sonoma, open space is composed of agriculture, hillsides, creeks and riparian corridors, parks and small pockets of land with less intensive uses within the city limits. Most of the agricultural land lies outside the city limits and the sphere of influence with small parcels of vineyards, gardens, grazing uses and horse pastures within the city boundaries. As with agriculture, most of the hillsides viewed from Sonoma are in the county. Although the agricultural uses and hillsides are not within the City's jurisdiction, they are of primary importance because, as mentioned above, they provide a natural greenbelt, are a natural resource and contribute to the scenic beauty of Sonoma.

Three major creeks lie within Sonoma's borders. Sonoma Creek, the major waterway of Sonoma Valley, forms the city's western boundary and provides a vital wildlife link for the entire Sonoma Valley. Nathanson Creek flows from the northeastern corner of the city through the eastside residential section. Fryer Creek flows through the west and southwest portions of the city and is in large part channelized or culverted within city limits. In addition to their riparian values, these creeks help define neighborhoods and contribute toward the city's open space network.

The importance of preserving open space is expressed in Goal 1 of the Environmental Resources Element. This goal provides for the acquisition and protection of important open space in and around Sonoma. Supporting policies include the development of an open space acquisition plan, providing that new development provide private and public open space and assisting the County in acquisi-

tion efforts. The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and the recently formed Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission appear to be the two key means by which the City and the County may cooperate in the preservation of Sonoma's greenbelt, the protection of important vistas, and the provision of public access, when appropriate, to hillside areas.

Recreation

Along with the concept of open space preservation, there was general agreement during the study sessions regarding the provision of recreational opportunities for all segments of the community and ensuring that open space areas are accessible and linked with trails and bike paths. Sonoma has a network of neighborhood parks, community parks, and connecting bikeways available to all. These parks mainly provide opportunities for passive recreation and spontaneous games. The City facilities are supplemented by County facilities such as Arnold Field and Maxwell Farms Regional Park, which is directly adjacent to city limits. Other facilities serve as significant open space areas, such as the Vallejo Home State Park, which, at 58 acres, is the largest tract of permanent open space within the city limits.

The intent of Goal ERE-4 is to respond to the recreational needs of the community. Accompanying policies and implementation measures require that recreational and cultural facilities be linked by bicycle and pedestrian networks, that a community recreation plan be prepared addressing all program and facilities needs and the establishment of a minimum parkland to population ratio.



Sonoma's historic Plaza is the heart of the City's network of community and neighborhood parks.

"The Patch," on Second Street East, exemplifies many of the contributions that agriculture makes to the community, including productive open space and access to locally grown produce.



COORDINATION WITH OTHER ELEMENTS

The environment cuts across jurisdictional boundaries and transcends legal definitions. While the Environmental Resources Element provides a focus for policies which reflect Sonoma's environmental values, related issues are addressed throughout the General Plan.

The Community Development Element

Through the Land Use Plan, the Community Development Element provides the framework for achieving many of the goals set forth in the Environmental Resources Element, most notably through its delineation of a tight sphere of influence and through the implementation of related policies limiting annexation and controlling the extension of services. By reducing the sphere of influence, the Land Use Plan helps protect Sonoma's greenbelt by preventing the encroachment of development. The Land Use Plan also designates lands within the city to be maintained in agricultural use or as hillsides.

The Community Development Element also provides the policy basis for cooperative planning with Sonoma County. The Town Design Guidelines called for in the element will address environ-

mental design issues such as the regulation of hillside and creek-side development. Through the provision of the Mixed Use land use designation and by locating higher density residential development near commercial centers, the Community Development Element seeks to reduce auto dependency and promote alternative forms of transportation.

The Local Economy Element

Agriculture is the main link between the Local Economy Element and the Environmental Resources Element. The Local Economy Element contains a variety of policies and implementation measures aimed at ensuring the continued health of Sonoma Valley's agricultural economy. Consistent with the Community Development Element, preventing the encroachment of development into agricultural areas one of the major policy directions of the element. In addition, the element supports the continued use of agricultural lands within the city. The Local Economy Element also supports the Environmental Resources Element by encouraging mixed-use development and a pedestrian presence in commercial areas, thereby helping to reduce auto use and encouraging biking and walking.

The Housing Element

The Housing Element and the Environmental Resources Element mesh both on the scale of city-wide policies and development-specific regulations. For example, by providing the policy basis for the Growth Management Ordinance, the Housing Element regulates the city's growth rate, which ultimately affects many environmental issues. In addition, the Housing Element provides for, in conjunction with the Community Development Element, housing opportunities within and adjacent to commercial areas, as well as mixed use development, as a means of reducing auto use. At the project level, the Housing Element includes policies promoting water and energy conservation.

The Circulation Element

Through its policies aimed at promoting transit and its emphasis on walking and biking as transportation, not just recreation, the Circulation Element provides the basis for a network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities intended to link Sonoma's parks, cultural facilities (including schools and other public institutions), and commercial centers. The element includes separate sets of goals, policies and implementation measures regarding bicycling and pedestrian issues and sets forth a comprehensive plan for a bicycle network, including detailed implementation goals.



In coordination with the Circulation Element, the Environmental resources Element calls for a network of bikepaths linking cultural, recreational, and commercial facilities.



Street trees fulfill many functions: They give shade, provide a visual amenity, and add to Sonoma's pedestrian scale.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal ERE-1 *Acquire and protect important open space in and around Sonoma.*

Policies:

1. The City shall work with the County, the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission, and other organizations to ensure the protection of the greenbelt surrounding the City.
2. Open space dedication or acquisition shall be based on creating a network of public and private spaces that reflects the significant natural and cultural characteristics of Sonoma.
3. The City shall support community programs which preserve and promote agriculture.
4. New development shall provide adequate private and, where designated, public open space. Acquisition of open space not directly related to development shall be contingent on community support.
5. The City shall work with the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and other public and private entities to identify lands for acquisition and assist where possible in their acquisition.

Goal ERE-2 *Identify, preserve and enhance important habitat areas and significant environmental resources.*

Policies:

6. The City shall create and maintain an updated inventory of environmental resources.
7. Riparian corridors shall be protected and where necessary enhanced through cooperative efforts with the Sonoma County Water Agency, the California Department of Fish and Game, and other interested agencies and organizations.
8. The City shall develop and implement a comprehensive program for the preservation and planting of trees.
9. Development shall be prohibited on ridgelines, and the design of residential development on hillsides shall be strictly controlled to avoid excessive grading and visual impacts.
10. The City shall work closely with the County and the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission to monitor hillside develop-

ment in areas within the City's viewshed.

11. Habitats that support threatened, rare or endangered species, as identified by the California Natural Diversity Data base or a consensus of experts, shall be preserved.
12. The City shall support efforts in Sonoma Valley to protect surface and groundwater resources and the valley watershed.
13. Development regulations shall minimize flood hazards and maximize erosion control consistent with soil conservation practices and watershed protection.
14. The City shall promote public awareness of environmental resources and issues relevant to Sonoma through the Environmental Advisory Commission and other organizations.
15. Evaluate developments proposed for vacant parcels and agricultural lands in terms of potential impacts on unique habitats or significant biological resources. When potential impacts in this regard are identified, the City may allow off-site mitigation when appropriate.
16. Cooperate with local farmers, ranchers, and the Open Space District in efforts to increase the extent of natural habitat protection within agricultural areas.

Goal ERE-3 Conserve natural resources.

Policies:

17. Promote local recycling and backyard composting programs.
18. Support efforts to develop cost-effective solid waste source reduction programs locally and County-wide.
19. Land development and transportation policies shall promote greater energy efficiency.
20. Local development standards, building requirements and landscape guidelines shall promote energy and water conservation.
21. The use of native and low-water use plant materials shall be promoted in new development and redevelopment.
22. The City shall set a positive example in the conservation of resources in its facilities, services and projects.
23. Support efforts to strengthen programs that monitor the use, transport, storage, handling, and disposal of hazardous materials.

Goal ERE-4 *Respond to the recreational needs of the community.*

Policies:

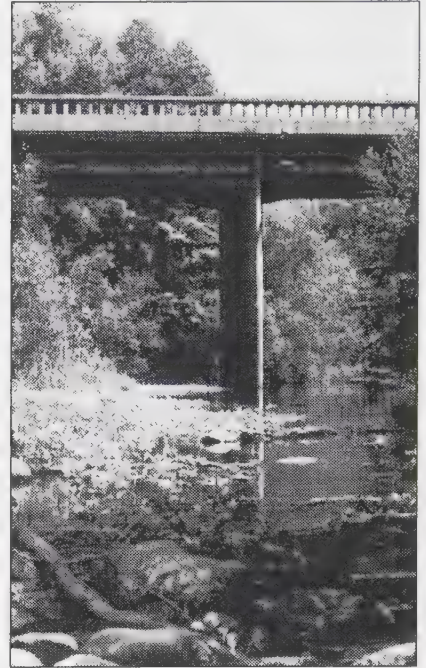
24. *The City, through the Community Services Commission, shall evaluate the recreational needs of the community on a regular and consistent basis.*
25. *A minimum neighborhood parkland ratio of 5 acres per 1,000 residents shall be maintained.*
26. *The City shall cooperate with the County, the school district and other appropriate agencies and organizations to develop new recreational facilities as needed and to maximize awareness and utilization of existing facilities and services.*
27. *Coordinate recreational facilities and organizations in order to reduce duplication and increase responsiveness to local needs.*
28. *Encourage the efficient use of existing facilities through promotion, scheduling, and aggressive maintenance.*
29. *Recreational, and cultural, and commercial facilities shall be linked by bicycle and pedestrian networks.*

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

The City Council, as part of its annual review of the General Plan, will determine implementation priorities for those measures which are not already ongoing or in place.

1. Develop an open space acquisition plan which defines preservation methods addressing land identified in the General Plan for potential acquisition.
2. Work with the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, the Board of Supervisors and other area agencies and public interest groups to implement the City open space acquisition plan.
3. Review and modify the Zoning Ordinance to ensure the adequacy of minimum public and private open space standards for new development.
4. Assist community organizations in establishing and administering programs, such as the Sonoma Community Agriculture Project and Farmers' Markets, that promote, preserve and enhance local agricultural uses.

5. Monitor the need for new parkland and recreation facilities and maintenance demands on existing facilities. Evaluate proposals for new residential development with regard to impacts in these areas.
6. Develop hillside development guidelines to protect designated hillside areas from excessive grading and visual impacts, preserve significant habitats, and prevent development on ridgelines.
7. Work with the Sonoma County Planning Department and the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission to monitor development proposed for the hillsides located to the north, east, and west of Sonoma.
8. Include building setback standards and preservation and restoration opportunities for creeks and creek habitats in the preparation of the Town Design Guidelines.
9. Establish standard conditions of project approval minimizing construction-related erosion through the use of sediment traps, seasonal grading restrictions, construction staging, and the use of groundcovers.
10. Establish standard conditions of project approval to ensure the maintenance and repair of catch basins, drives, and parking areas.
11. Work with the Sonoma County Water Agency, Department of Fish and Game and other interested parties (including private conservation groups) to coordinate development and implementation of guidelines and ordinances regulating preservation and enhancement of riparian corridors, as well as and natural habitats which support threatened, rare, or endangered species.
12. Work with the Community Services Commission to develop and maintain a tree inventory and to implement a comprehensive tree preservation and planting plan which includes recommendations for increasing canopy cover, street tree plantings, parking lot shading, and tree maintenance.
13. Work with the Sonoma Valley Watershed Council and affected agencies to develop guidelines which preserve and enhance surface and groundwater resources and the valley watershed.
14. With the assistance of the Sonoma Ecology Center and other relevant groups, establish and maintain an inventory of significant environmental resources and features.






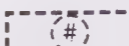



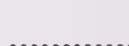

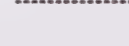
Sonoma Creek, the valley's largest waterway, runs along the city's western boundary.

15. Implement the Source Reduction and Recycling Element and the Household Hazardous Waste Element.
16. Work with the Environmental Advisory Commission, the Ecology Center, and other interested organizations and parties to further develop and implement local recycling and composting programs.
17. Assist the Sonoma County Public Works Department and other agencies and organizations, as appropriate, to develop efficient and cost-effective local and regional source reduction programs.
18. The Building Official shall develop landscape guidelines and standard conditions for water and energy conservation for inclusion in Conditions of Approval for new development.
19. Continue to implement the Xeriscape Ordinance.
20. Develop a City conservation policy for the on-going conservation of City resources in its facilities, services and projects. When feasible, establish model programs for recycling, energy conservation, and other aspects of City operations.
21. Work with the City of Sonoma Fire Department, Sonoma Valley fire district representatives and other affected agencies in continuing to support educational and hazard response programs for the handling and disposal of hazardous materials.
22. The Community Services Commission shall work with the CSA 35 committee, local recreational providers and other interested parties to develop a community recreation plan which includes an assessment of existing unmet and future recreation needs in terms of programs and facilities. Based on this assessment, develop a priority list of needed programs and facilities.
23. Review existing recreational programs and identify opportunities for coordination among recreational providers and users and increased local control. Based on the review, develop a long-range programs for achieving increased coordination, beginning with existing City programs.
24. Work with the Sonoma County Parks and Recreation and Permit and Resource Management Departments, the Sonoma Valley Unified School District and other affected local and regional agencies and organizations to implement the community recreation plan.
25. Work with the Sonoma County Parks and Recreation

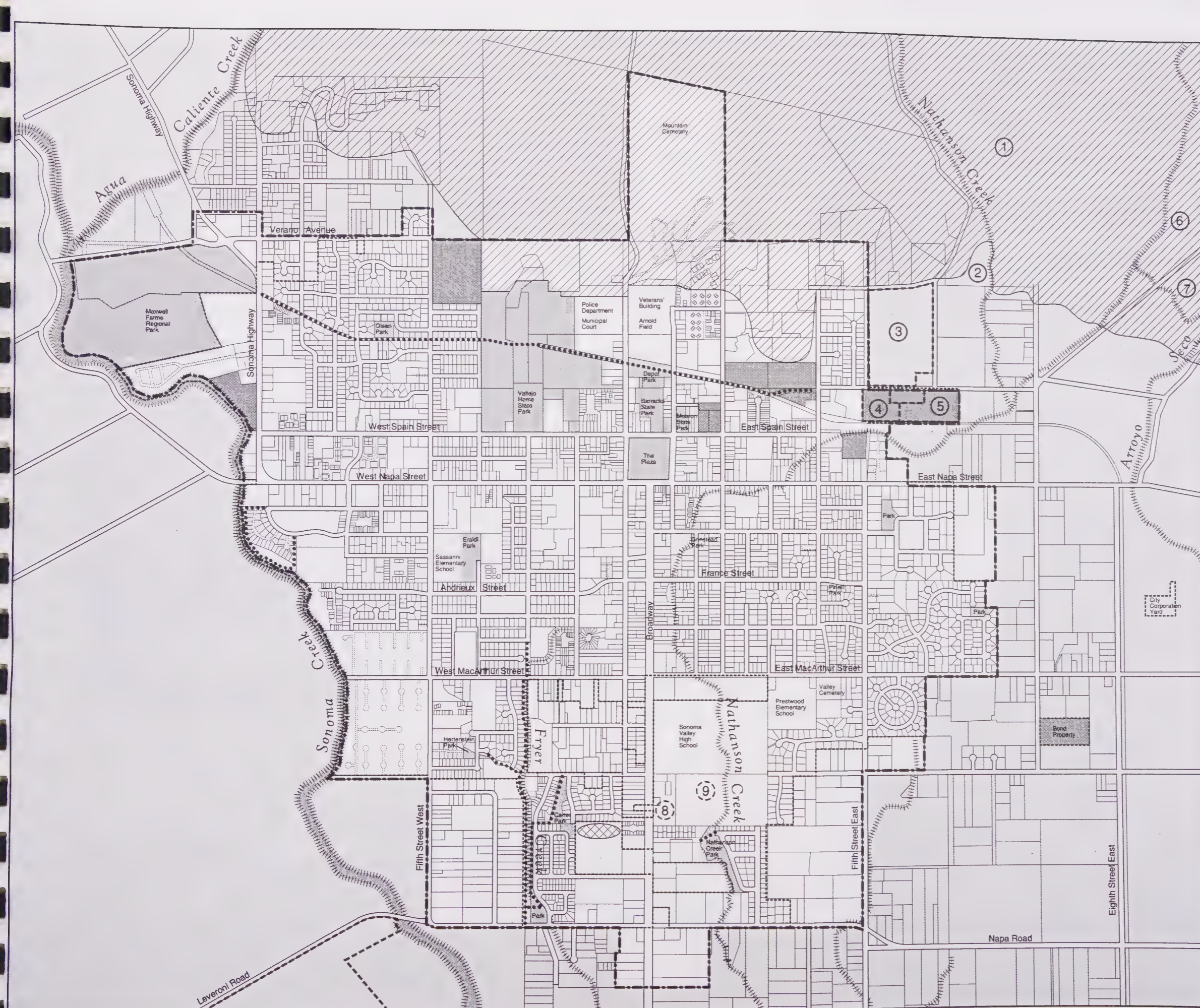
Department to provide for local scheduling of the Veterans' Building.

26. Publish a quarterly recreational guide to Sonoma Valley as a means of publicizing and promoting local recreational opportunities.
27. Provide a map of pedestrian and bike trails in relation to significant natural features.

Environmental Resources

-  Parks
-  Agricultural Land within the Sphere of Influence
-  Agricultural Preserves (See Technical Appendix, page 158, Table 28)
-  Agricultural Preserves with Non-Renewal Notices
-  Hillsides
-  Vernal Pool Areas
-  Creeks/Potential Riparian Corridors
-  Class 1 Bike Path
-  City Limit
-  Sphere of Influence

City of Sonoma
Community Development Department





Circulation Element

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan



CIRCULATION

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important components of a community is its circulation network. It provides the connection between different land uses, linking homes to shopping, jobs and recreation. Without an efficient and integrated transportation system, people in Sonoma would not be able to combine the benefits of small town living with the job and recreation opportunities afforded by easy access to Santa Rosa, Marin County, and San Francisco.

The purpose of the Circulation Element is to coordinate development of the city's circulation system with existing and planned land uses. Areas of particular focus include transit, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements, as well as auto use. This element balances the need to facilitate and promote alternative modes of transportation—including buses, bicycling, and walking—with the provision of an effective roadway network that reflects the character and scale of Sonoma.

The Circulation Element provides the policy basis for the development of an integrated circulation system, providing for alternative modes of transportation, and specifies the improvements necessary to resolve existing deficiencies and accommodate planned growth. The discussion of circulation network components begins with pedestrian and bicycle issues, followed by transit and auto use, with separate goals, policies, and implementation measures provided for each. Overall, the element emphasizes the importance of promoting alternatives to auto use as a means of avoiding the need for or minimizing road improvements while maintaining adequate service levels.

PEDESTRIANS

Sonoma is a city with a size and a scale well-suited to walking. This is one of the features that makes the Plaza so enticing to both local residents and visitors. Unfortunately, many of the characteristics that make the Plaza area so pleasant to walk around vanish as one moves away from the Plaza to other commercial and residential areas around the city. People who might otherwise choose to walk to the store, the library, or a restaurant do not because they are often confronted with intimidating noise, inconvenience, lack of shade and even lack of sidewalks. So instead of walking, they get in their car and drive. This creates a catch-22 situation: since most people tend to drive, there is little incentive to provide amenities for pedestrians, but because there are few amenities for pedestrians, most people tend not to walk.

Goal 1 of the Circulation Element and its associated policies and implementation measures are intended to recognize the inherent qualities of walking in Sonoma and improve upon those qualities

State Requirements

The Circulation Element is one of the seven elements mandated by state law. The requirements for the Circulation Element, while broad, are straightforward. The element must address "... the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use plan"

(California Government Code, section 65302 (b)).

The rail-road right-of-way along Eighth Street East may one day be developed with a bikepath.

in order to get more people out of their cars. As discussed in the following section on bicycles, Class 1 bikeways are also commonly used as pedestrian pathways and serve as important links in the pedestrian network.



BICYCLING

Sonoma's size, scale, climate and general topography make it ideal for bicycling most of the year. Many residents, however, continue to use automobiles because the city lacks the facilities and amenities to make riding a bike an effective alternative to driving a car. The second goal/policy set in the Circulation Element promotes bicycling as a means of reducing the number of local trips on our roadway network, recognizing it as more than just a recreational activity. In Sonoma, Class 1 bicycle facilities are also used by pedestrians and serve as an important element in the pedestrian pathway system. Policies and implementation programs have been included in this section to recognize this dual use and minimize conflicts between bicyclists and pedestrians.

Bicycle Safety

In establishing a bicycle network, safety is a primary consideration. Safety issues extend to the overall layout of the bike path system, the design of specific features such as bike lanes and crossings, and public education, all of which are addressed in the policies and implementation measures that follow. With regard to the proposed bicycle network, additional Class 1 bike lanes are proposed, in order to separate bicycle and automobile traffic, as well as bikeway connections to schools. Addressing potential conflicts

between bikes and cars, implementation measure 16 calls for the Traffic Safety Committee to review existing and proposed bikepath/street crossings and develop recommendations to improve safety and visibility. The element also provides for the continuation and expansion of the City's bicycle safety program. Design standards for bicycle facilities will be developed through the Town Design guidelines.

Bikeway Classifications:

Bikeways are typically classified as being one of three types:

- Class 1: A completely separated right-of-way designated for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians. Cross-flows by pedestrians and motorists are minimized. These are commonly called bike paths. The paths along Fryer Creek and the abandoned railroad right-of-way across the northern portion of the city are Class 1 routes.
- Class 2: A restricted right-of-way along a street designated for the exclusive or semi-exclusive use of bicycles. Through travel by pedestrians or motor vehicles is not allowed. A bikeway that is designated part of the roadway and identified by pavement markings and signing is commonly referred to as a "bike lane." Bike lanes presently exist along a portion of Broadway, Studley Street and on Dewell Drive.
- Class 3: A shared street right-of-way designated as such by signs placed on vertical posts or stenciled on the pavement. Any bikeway which shares its through traffic right-of-way with motor vehicles or pedestrians. These are typically called "bike routes" and offer the least protection from automobile traffic.

Many variations in these standard types are possible. For example, some communities use "fog-lines" striped along street shoulders in areas where there is not enough room for a standard Class 2 lane. This reduces the width of vehicle travel lanes and creates a common area shared by bicyclists and parked cars. The use of alternatives to standard bike lanes will be explored in the development of the Town Design Guidelines and the Bicycle Plan.

Bicycle Plan:

The Bicycle Improvement Plan (page 92) shows the proposed bikeway system for the City of Sonoma. The system is comprised of the three classes of bike-ways—including the Caltrans/County designated regional touring route of Broadway, West Napa and Sonoma Highway—and is intended to accomplish the following:

- Link major community focal points such as schools, shopping, historic and cultural sites, parks and other recreational facilities with the residential areas of the city;
- Provide continuity and develop a system identity that will make the bicycle network a safe, effective and efficient alternative to the automobile;
- Establish Class 1 and 2 routes wherever possible, while also recognizing that existing street widths and on-street parking needs place limitations on the location and extent of these type of routes; and,
- Implement improvements to the system to ensure that essential links can be completed in the short-term.

The Bicycle Improvement Plan and related goals, policies, and implementation measures provided in the Circulation Element will form the basis of a more specific Bicycle Plan, adopted as a separate document. This plan will identify routes and other improvements in greater detail and establish target dates for their implementation. The development of a bike plan, separate from the General Plan, is a state requirement which must be met if the City is to be eligible to receive funding for bicycle improvements.



Sonoma County Transit

Of the various transit providers operating in Sonoma Valley, Sonoma County Transit is by far the most significant in terms of the amount of routes provided and the number of passengers served. For more detailed information the transit services available in Sonoma Valley, see the Circulation Issues section of the Technical Appendix.

TRANSIT ISSUES

Sonoma Valley receives transit service from two providers, Sonoma County Transit and Golden Gate Transit. Sonoma County Transit provides an intra-valley service, as well as routes connecting Sonoma with Petaluma and Santa Rosa. Golden Gate Transit provides a bus service between Sonoma and San Francisco. (This route may be terminated due to limited ridership and lack of funding.) Both the Sonoma County service and the Golden Gate service are partially funded by the City of Sonoma. In addition to the regularly scheduled routes, a door-to-door service, oriented toward elderly users, is also provided.

Perhaps the major constraint on increased transit use is geography. Sonoma lies away from the major North Bay travel corridor, Highway 101, making express service to job centers such as Santa Rosa and San Francisco expensive. There are no readily apparent opportunities for exclusive bus lanes, as there are on Highway 101, which would help make transit more attractive to auto users. In addition, Sonoma Valley has a dispersed population and low densities that are not conducive to cost-effective transit provision.

The City and the transit providers hope to increase transit use among all groups by reducing headways between buses and expanding the hours of operation. The City is committed to work-

ing with the transit providers in improving services and increasing use through continued funding, transit-oriented land use planning, and the installation of improved transit facilities. In terms of land use, the Land Use Plan of the Community Development Element calls for increased densities around existing retail commercial areas and promotes mixed-use development. This pattern encourages walking and helps create transit nodes with a sufficient level of activity to support transit services. In terms of new facilities, improvements proposed in the Circulation Element range from additional bus shelters and turn-outs to a transit center with park and ride facilities. The feasibility of downtown jitney service will also be investigated.

STREET SYSTEM

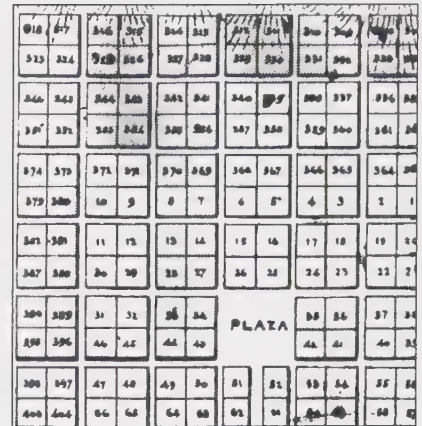
Sonoma's central street system follows a grid pattern, established in the 1800's by General Vallejo when the city was first laid out. As the city has grown, the basic grid has been elaborated in some areas, ignored in others. Many newer residential subdivisions employ curvilinear streets. The dominant element of the system is state Highway 12, which corresponds to the major local streets in the city: Broadway, West Napa Street, and the Sonoma Highway. The regional importance of Highway 12, in conjunction with its path through the heart of the city, means that local circulation conditions are greatly affected by regional traffic and, therefore, by regional growth.

The major north/south elements of the street grid in terms of traffic volume are the Sonoma Highway, Fifth Street West, Broadway and Eighth Street East. The major east/west elements include Spain Street, Napa Street, Andrieux Street, MacArthur Street, and Napa/Leveroni Roads. These primary elements are supported by a number of lesser arterials, collectors, and local streets. The road network within Sonoma's Planning Area is made up of five types of roadways, each of which serves a different function, as follows:

State Highway: Although in traffic engineering parlance Highway 12 is considered an arterial, it is unique among local roadways. The highway is not only a primary route for through traffic, commuters, and tourists, but it also carries the majority of local trips of any distance.

Arterials: These streets carry traffic to and from the highway and to major commercial and public destinations. Volumes are heavy compared to connectors and local streets.

Connectors: These connect the arterials to the local streets and minor commercial and public destinations. In some cases a connector may serve as a lesser link to the highway.



The Grid System and Through Traffic

The extension of the grid system, as called for in policy 17, represents a fundamental General Plan policy, expressed not only in the Circulation Element, but also in the Community Development Element, the Housing Element, and the City Council's Vision Statement. Care must be taken, however, to minimize the impacts of through traffic on residential areas. While through traffic can be reduced through the use of stop signs and other means, it must be recognized that the grid system helps to reduce traffic on arterials and collectors by allowing alternative routes and dispersing traffic throughout the street network.

Highway 12 Improvements

Sonoma has benefitted recently from significant improvements to Highway 12, along Broadway, from West MacArthur to West Napa Street, and along West Napa Street, from Broadway to Fifth Street West. In 1995, Caltrans completed a reconstruction of those segments of the roadway and improved the intersection at Fifth West/West Napa by allowing free left-turns and by installing a free-right turn lane on eastbound West Napa Street.

In addition to the upgrading of the road surface and certain intersections, the project contributed to the Broadway area visually by lowering the crown of the roadway. Extensive drainage improvements were also installed.

Local Streets: These are usually residential streets. They provide access to neighborhoods and the individual parcels within them. They are generally developed with curb, gutter or sidewalk.

Rural: These carry traffic to outlying districts; they are generally not developed with curb, gutter, and sidewalk.

Table 7 categorizes Sonoma's main roads according to the functional types defined above and provides information on various characteristics, such as number of lanes and peak hour capacity and volume. The roadway types are intended to work together as a system, with each type devoted to its primary function. Problems may arise when roadway types serve mixed functions, as with Highway 12. However, it is impossible to segregate functions completely, and some problems of mixed uses are inevitable.

The current travel pattern within the Sonoma is dominated by Highway 12 (Broadway, West Napa Street, and the Sonoma Highway), with the highest volumes occurring along West Napa Street. Supporting arterials include Napa Road, Fifth Street West, MacArthur Street, Second Street West, and West Spain Street. The heavy traffic on Highway 12, quantified in Table 7, has many sources: commuters, through traffic, tourists, and residents.

This traffic can also be categorized in terms of different kinds of trips: local trips, which begin and end within the Planning Area; external trips, which begin in the Planning Area and end outside (or vice-versa); and through trips, which begin and end outside the Planning Area. The high volumes on West Napa Street result from the merging of these different kinds of traffic. Based on an analysis of turning movement counts taken at 65 intersections in the valley, it appears that at least 50% of the traffic on West Napa Street is made up of through and external commute traffic (during peak weekday conditions). The 1990 census reported that 57% of Sonoma's employed residents commute outside the city to work, up from less than 40% reported in a 1987 survey. Approximately 25% of the through traffic travels between Santa Rosa and Napa. Traffic counts on Napa Road east of Broadway indicate that most of the volume on this road is made up of trips between the cities of Santa Rosa and Napa and between the cities of Sonoma and Napa. The Napa Road route to and from Napa city has become increasingly popular over the last several years.

Much of the traffic on the arterials and collectors associated with West Napa Street appears to result from driver diversion to avoid the congestion on the main route. West Spain Street has been especially affected by this tendency: Volumes have almost doubled over the last ten years. While the increase in traffic along West Spain Street is well within capacity limits, residents along this street have been affected. In the downtown area, the Plaza experi-

Street Characteristics and Capacity

<u>Street Segment</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Lanes</u>	<u>R/W</u>	<u>Capacity¹</u>	<u>Vol.²</u>
West Napa Street					
Riverside to 5th W.	Arterial	3	90 ³	950	1,060
Fifth W. to Second W.	Arterial	3	90 ³	950	830
Second W. to Broadway	Arterial	2	N.A.	650	745
East Napa Street					
First W. to Fifth E.	Connector	2	55-60	700	290
West Spain Street					
Sonoma Hwy to 5th W.	Connector	2	N.A.	805	350
5th W. to 1st W.	Connector	2	N.A.	645	420
First Street West					
W. Napa to W. Spain	Connector	2	N.A.	500	250
First Street East					
E. Napa to E. Spain	Connector	2	N.A.	500	285
Andrieux Street	Connector	2	N.A.	700	205
Sonoma Highway					
Verano to Maxwell:	Arterial	4	110	3,075	1,035
South of Maxwell:	Arterial	4	110	1,380	990
North of W. Spain:	Arterial	2	60	1,175	1,005
South of W. Spain:	Arterial	2	60	1,115	740
Broadway					
W. Napa to MacArthur	Arterial	5	110	2,805	490
MacArthur to Napa Rd.	Arterial	2-3	110	945	600
Napa Rd. to Watmaugh	Arterial	2	110	700	495
Napa Road	Arterial	2	60-70	980	485
Leveroni Road					
Broadway to 5th W.	Arterial	2	55-60	1,070	445
West MacArthur	Connector	2	55	700	205
East MacArthur					
Broadway to city limit	Connector	2	55	700	180
Fifth Street West					
Verano to W. Spain	Connector	2	N.A.	700	485
W. Napa to Andrieux	Arterial	4	60-70	2,400	660
Andrieux to MacArthur	Arterial	3	60-70	1,200	490
MacArthur to Napa Rd.	Arterial	2	N.A.	1,080	330
Verano Avenue	Connector	2	N.A.	500	425

- 1) Hourly one-way capacity at level of service C.
- 2) One-way volume in the most heavily traveled direction (based on traffic counts taken in the summer of 1993).
- 3) Ninety-foot right-of-way being acquired through setback ordinance.

Source: Crane Transportation Group

Table 7

ences considerable traffic congestion, not only because of the sheer volume of traffic, but also because of the lack of parking, the conflicts created by vehicles using on-street parking, and the large pedestrian presence. The frequent double parking of trucks necessitated by the lack of rear access to many commercial buildings further aggravates the congestion problem.

Future traffic patterns, i.e., volume and distribution, will be largely determined by the growth of jobs and housing, both in Sonoma and regionally, and the disposition of improvements to the local circulation system. Growth will determine future volumes, while circulation improvements can only modify distribution. An overview of recommended improvements is provided by the Circulation Plan map. Traffic projections for the year 2005 (as shown on Table 8) indicate increased traffic volumes for Highway 12 and its supporting arterials. This traffic is the result of expected growth, not only in Sonoma and Sonoma Valley, but also in Santa Rosa, Napa, Marin County and San Francisco.

ROADWAY NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

The concept proposed in the Circulation Element for roadway network improvements is to minimize improvements within Sonoma while promoting alternatives to automobile use. The improvement and re-routing of Highway 116 would also be pursued as a means of reducing through traffic in Sonoma. Although the roadway network discussion in the Circulation Element is intended to address arterials and connector streets, new and extended local streets will also be needed to serve future development and extend the grid pattern. Such streets typically do not have community-wide planning implications and will be evaluated through the development review process. However, those identified through the General Plan update process are discussed below.

- As development occurs in the area, Fourth Street West would be extended north from Spain Street to the City bike path, and then northerly from the bike path, potentially connecting with an eastern extension of Verano Avenue. To ensure that the extension serves the neighborhood, rather than as a through route, no connection would be made across the existing Class 1 bikepath between Linda Drive and Claudia Drive.
- A north/south connection is planned between Malet Street and Leveroni Road (connector). The segment between Newcomb Street and Leveroni Road—Fryer Creek Drive—is under construction.

Road widenings within the city will be minimized to the extent possible, but some improvements may be necessary to maintain adequate traffic conditions and levels of safety.

Projected Traffic Volumes¹ and Road Widenings²

<u>Location</u>	<u>Existing (1993) Volume/Lanes/LOS</u>			<u>Projected (2005) Volume/Lanes/LOS</u>		
Sonoma Highway						
Verano to Maxwell:	1,035	4	A	1,180	4	A
Maxwell to Spain:	1,005	2-4	B	1,205	2	D
Spain to Riverside:	740	2	A	865	2	B
West Napa Street						
Riverside to 5th W. ³	1,060	3	C/D	1,210	3	E
5th W. to 2nd W.	830	3	B	920	3	C
2nd W. to Broadway	745	2	E	855	3	F
Mitigated ⁴			B			C
Broadway						
W. Napa to MacArthur	490	5	A	630	5	A
MacArthur to Napa Rd.	600	2-3	A	760	5	B
Leveroni Road						
Broadway to 5th W.	460	2	A	580	2	A
5th W. to west	445	2	A	540	2	A
Fifth Street West						
W. Napa to Andrieux	660	3-4	A	790	3-4	A
Andrieux to MacArthur	490	3	A	720	3	A
MacArthur to Leveroni	330	2	A	475	2	A

- 1) Volumes reflect weekday conditions during the peak p.m. traffic period (4:30 to 5:30 p.m.) in the most heavily travelled direction and are derived from counts taken in June of 1993. Projections are based on a 10-year growth scenario. Projections which exceed existing or projected capacity are shown in bold.
- 2) The estimated need for traffic lanes is based on maintaining level of service D. When the widening of a segment is indicated, the traffic volume and number of lanes are shown in bold.
- 3) On this segment, it has been determined that LOS E is acceptable and that the widening of the segment will not be considered unless it appears that LOS F will be reached.
- 4) Widening to three lanes (through removal of on-street parking) would be recommended in order to avoid unacceptable LOS.

Source: Crane Transportation Group

Table 8

- Broadway, between Malet Street and Clay Street, may be widened to three lanes as a safety improvement.
- West Napa Street, between Second Street West and Broadway, may be widened to a continuous three lane section.
- Napa/Leveroni Road, between Eighth Street East and Fifth Street West, may be improved with turn-pockets at major intersections and Class 2 bikelanes.

The proposed widenings, as with any other road improvement, will be implemented over time and only as needed and will be designed to maintain and enhance to the greatest extent possible the historic and small-town qualities of Sonoma.

Intersection improvements include lane additions, turn-pockets, and, in some cases, signalization. As noted above, the need for improvements is based on the goals of maintaining safety and adequate traffic flow. Because intersections, rather than mid-block road widths, are the major determinants of local traffic conditions, it is particularly important to ensure that they are capable of accommodating traffic flows smoothly.

In the course of the General Plan update, 21 key intersections were evaluated by the traffic model in order to determine existing and projected improvement needs. In some cases, the improvement recommended would amount to only a simple restriping, while other intersections would require significant upgrading, including signalization. The intersections most important to the circulation system for which improvements will be needed are shown on the Circulation Improvement Plan. These intersection are as follows:

- Broadway/West Napa Street
- Broadway/Andrieux Street (borderline)
- West Napa Street/First Street West
- West Napa Street/Seventh Street West (safety)
- Fifth Street West/West Spain Street
- Fifth Street West/Andrieux Street
- Fifth Street West/West MacArthur Street

The signalization of the intersection of West Napa Street/Seventh Street West has been identified as a priority because the existing, unsignalized configuration does not provide adequate safety or pedestrian access for the nearby Sonoma Valley Public Library and commercial uses in the area. A discussion of the criteria used to identify the need for improvements is provided in the Technical Appendix. The list of potential intersection improvements should be considered a worst-case scenario. As is the case with potential road widenings, intersection improvements will be implemented

on an as-needed basis and only with the specific authorization of the City Council. The Council has the authority to modify or waive improvements found to be incompatible with the historic character of Sonoma.

PHASING AND FUNDING

Short-term phasing of the roadway network improvements will occur through the City's Capital Improvement Plan and the State Transportation Improvement Program process. In addition, many recommended improvements will be put in place as a condition of project approval as development occurs. Implementation measure 33 calls for the development of a phasing plan to guide the implementation of recommended improvements and identify potential funding sources. Only a general discussion of funding is possible, given the variety of recommended improvements and their conceptual nature. While the vagaries of transportation funding sources make long-range predictions difficult, it seems likely that the trend toward greater local financial responsibility will persist. Because many of the most substantial improvements recommended in the Circulation Element involve a state highway (Highway 12), limited state and federal participation might be available. However, in developing its phasing and funding program, the City should plan for 100% local funding and should work to develop the revenue sources necessary to achieve that goal.

With regard to local funding sources, the City will continue to rely on Capital Improvement Program revenues, Community Development Agency monies, gas tax funds, and, as appropriate, developer participation to finance individual improvements. The Circulation Element also provides for the development of a Circulation Improvement Fee, to be imposed on all construction, as an additional funding source. Dedicated to circulation improvements of all types (not just roadway improvements), the fee would provide a stable, long-range source of revenue that would come from new development and from specified improvements or changes to existing development. Another potential source of funding is the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA). Composed of representatives from the Board of Supervisors and from each city in Sonoma County, the SCTA is responsible for distributing funds generated by an increase in the state gas tax approved by the voters in June, 1990. These funds may only be spent on the maintenance of existing facilities or on highway improvements which are part of a county-wide improvement plan to be adopted by the SCTA.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER ELEMENTS

Circulation and land use are interconnected, as is recognized in the state requirements pertaining to circulation elements, which

Transportation Fees

Currently, Sonoma does not assess development fees specifically designated for transportation improvements, although proceeds from Impact fees and Capital Improvement fees are sometimes used for that purpose. Policy 3 and implementation measure 16 of the Circulation Element call for the development of a Circulation Improvement Fee which would be tied to the impacts of new development and which could be used for all types of improvements, including those related to transit, bicycling, and pedestrians. Such a fee will not be a panacea, however, since impact fees can only be assessed to mitigate problems caused by new development. Impact fees cannot be charged to address pre-existing situations.



Circulation and Land Use

The intimate connection between circulation and land is exemplified at the local level by the grid system set forth by General Vallejo, a pattern which has given the city its enduring form.

require a correlation between the circulation element and the land use element. The Circulation Element is also closely related to the Housing and Environmental Resources elements and has ties to the Local Economy Element.

The Community Development Element

The Land Use Plan and the associated definitions of the land use designations provided in the Community Development Element establish the general arrangement of local land use, by type and intensity, from which circulation relationships spring. Through the organization of uses, the Land Use Plan lays the basis for linking housing, employment, goods and services, schools, and parks and recreation. The connection between land use and circulation was broadly addressed by using the Land Use Plan as the basis for the traffic model used to develop projected traffic volumes. Building on that foundation, the elements are designed to work in concert to achieve various General Plan policy objectives. For example, in order to reduce auto dependence and promote walking, the Land Use Plan establishes higher densities adjacent to commercial centers and encourages mixed-use development. These measures also help promote transit. At the same time, the Circulation Element helps organize land use through policies requiring the extension of the grid street system.

The Community Development Element and the Circulation Element are also linked in terms of design issues through the Town Design Guidelines. Policy 23 of the Community Development Element requires that development and redevelopment along Highway 12 incorporate pedestrian and bicycle amenities in a consistent design scheme, while policy 24 requires safety improvements at street/bikepath connections. Landscaping and other improvements may also be required at major intersections through design standards developed for identified gateways (CDE policy 26).

The Local Economy Element

Through its programs to ensure acceptable traffic conditions, address downtown parking, and improve pedestrian conditions, the Circulation Element helps support the Local Economy Element in its objective of maintaining the continued vitality of Sonoma's commercial centers. In their policies and implementation measures, the two elements also seek to encourage a pedestrian presence in retail and service areas, particularly the downtown, by promoting mixed-use development and ground floor retail use.

The Housing Element

Like the Community Development Element, the Housing Element

includes policies and implementation measures aimed at promoting mixed use development and locating higher density residential development near commercial centers. In this regard, the Housing Element expands upon those basic directions by providing guidance for the design of new housing, ensuring that higher density developments are compatible with their surroundings and include provision for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users.

The Environmental Resources Element

The Circulation and Environmental Resources elements share the objectives of reducing auto dependency, encouraging transit use, and promoting energy conservation. For its part, the Circulation Element provides goals and policies intended to establish safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian networks linking housing, shopping, services, schools, and parks, while the Environmental Resources Element includes additional measures supporting that effort, including the development of a bicycle route map. In addition, the Environmental Resources Element includes policies and implementation measures for a program of street tree plantings. Street trees make the use of streets more enjoyable for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal CE-1 *Provide a continuous pathway network along major thoroughfares and through neighborhoods to connect community facilities and commercial centers and create a pleasant, safe and healthful environment for walking throughout Sonoma.*

Policies:

1. *Maintain a balanced development pattern of infill and open space and promote mixed uses where appropriate along the routes established in the pathway plan in order to encourage ease of accessibility for pedestrians.*
2. *Through new development and redevelopment of existing properties and neighborhoods, establish a pathway system of "short-cuts" that take pedestrians away from major streets whenever possible.*
3. *Improve pedestrian circulation and safety at major intersections.*

Goal CE-2 *Establish a safe and convenient system of bike-ways and essential support facilities that will encourage the use of bicycles as a realistic alternative to the automobile.*

Mixed Use

Encouraging mixed use development is a theme expressed throughout the General Plan. Mixed use development contributes toward several key policy objectives:

- *Reducing auto use.*
- *Encouraging transit.*
- *Ensuring a pedestrian presence in commercial areas.*
- *Promoting variety in housing types.*

Policies and implementation measures in support of mixed use may be found in every element of the plan, but begin with the Community Development Element and the Land Use Plan, where the Mixed Use land use designation is established.

Supporting policies and programs are provided in the Local Economy Element, the Housing Element, the Environmental Resources Element, and the Circulation Element.

Policies:

4. Implement the improvements called for in the Bicycle Improvement Plan map according to the phasing schedule and public review process set forth below.
5. Protected bicycle parking facilities shall be required in all new commercial development and redevelopment, at multi-unit residential projects, and at all new and existing public facilities.
6. The City shall promote bicycle safety and work with interested agencies and local organizations to coordinate facilities and provide updated maps and related information on the bikeway system in order to encourage it as an alternative to driving.
7. The City shall investigate methods for resolving the potential conflict between bicyclists and on-street parking in order to increase the number of Class 2 routes in the city and eventually eliminate the use of Class 3 routes.
8. The City shall develop bikeway design standards to insure consistency in the development of all bikeway components, including landscaping and parking facilities, and to minimize conflicts between bicyclists and automobiles or pedestrians.

Goal CE-3 **Improve the city's roadway and transit network to minimize through trips and ensure safe and convenient access to centers of activity while maintaining Sonoma's small-town character.**

Policies:

9. Maintain a balanced development pattern and promote a mixture of infill and high-quality open space, and encourage higher densities where appropriate in order to improve the viability of public transit and improve accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists.
10. The City shall continue to participate with the County and other agencies in accommodating the transit needs of Sonoma residents.
11. The City shall encourage land use and parking proposals that promote alternatives to automobile transportation and shared parking facilities.
12. The City shall maximize the efficient use of the existing circulation system while promoting alternatives to automobile use for local and regional trips.
13. Aggressively enforce traffic laws in order to promote safety for all users of the street system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and

drivers.

14. Implement specified circulation improvements within Sonoma as necessary to preserve safety and provide opportunities for alternative means of transportation.
15. The impact of new development on Sonoma's critical intersections shall be quantified during the environmental review process. Project proponents shall mitigate the impact as a condition of project approval either through actual installation of all or part of the improvement, or through the payment of appropriate fees.
16. The City shall improve parking availability and traffic and pedestrian circulation around the Plaza area while maintaining the historic and small-town character of the Plaza.
17. New streets shall extend Sonoma's basic grid pattern where feasible.
18. Truck routes shall be established and enforced to reduce street repair and maintenance impacts and to minimize the impacts of truck traffic in residential areas.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

The City Council, in its annual review of the General Plan, shall assign implementation priorities and responsibilities for those measures which are not already ongoing.

1. As part of the Town Design Guidelines, develop pathway guidelines related to location, design and construction of pedestrian facilities and amenities.
2. In the planning process for new development, review and require opportunities for safe and convenient pedestrian access, separated from parking when possible and connecting to adjacent uses.
3. Develop a monitoring program to determine the effectiveness of pedestrian improvements and to provide a periodic count of pedestrian activity.
4. Periodically review sidewalk and other pedestrian facility standards to insure their adequacy and safety.
5. Establish a program to ensure safe passage along the pathway system at all times and to protect the pathways and adjoining development.
6. Work with interested merchant groups and organizations to

Maintaining the Sphere of Influence

Maintaining the Sphere of Influence, as provided for in the Community Development Element, is critical to ensuring that the traffic projections associated with the Land Use Plan are not exceeded. Policies 1 through 4 of the Community Development Element fix the Sphere of Influence through the life of the General Plan and prohibit utility extensions outside of the sphere for new residential or commercial development. These policies would be implemented in cooperation with Sonoma County, with the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission serving as a means of monitoring development applications in the unincorporated area.

promote walking, and provide incentives to people who walk instead of drive to shop or do other activities.

7. Create and fund a pedestrian improvement category in the five-year Capital Improvement Program as a mechanism for identifying, budgeting and implementing specific pedestrian improvements, including sidewalk repair and filling gaps in the sidewalk system.
8. All new traffic signals along or at crossings of designated bike-ways shall provide cross-walk actuators at curbside for the use of bicyclists; and existing signals shall be similarly retrofitted over time.
9. Bicycle and pedestrian issues, when relevant, shall be considered in the review of all discretionary planning applications.
10. A Bicycle Plan shall be adopted, identifying specific improvements and target dates for their implementation in accordance with the bicycle provisions of the Circulation Element.
11. In the designs for bicycle routes and facilities developed in conjunction with the Town Design Guidelines and the Bicycle Plan, alternatives to the standard bikelane types shall be explored, such as the use of "fog lines" on streets, creating a common bicycling and parking area, where normal Class 2 bike lanes are not feasible.
12. In the design of creekside bikepaths, when necessary to protect existing riparian habitats, place bikeways at least 25 feet from the top of the creek bank and minimize the construction of bikepaths along both sides of any creek.
13. All new development or redevelopment adjacent to or containing designated bikeways shall be required to provide the necessary rights-of-way and improvements to the system in accordance with the adopted bikeway plan (as amended from time-to-time) as a condition of project approval.
14. Continue to work with Caltrans and the County to encourage regional bicycling routes, facilities and services (such as bike carriers on transit buses and racks at transit hubs).
15. The City shall work with the School District, private schools in the area and other interested organizations to promote a program of bicycle registration, safety and etiquette by continuing and expanding upon the Police Department's bicycle education program.
16. The City shall clearly mark and provide appropriate warning

signs at all intersections of Class 1 bikeways with streets. The Traffic Safety Committee shall review these intersections and develop recommendations for improving their safety and visibility.

17. Maintain an active enforcement program of bicycle registration and operation. Use fines and fees to support maintenance and promotion of the bikeway system.
18. Amend the Municipal Code where appropriate to reduce demand for on-street parking (for example, prohibitions on non-automobile parking or storage in driveways; eliminating garage conversions to living space; providing greater setbacks for garages in order to lengthen driveways; time-specific restrictions for on-street parking, etc.).
19. As part of city-wide design guidelines, establish requirements for bicycle access and parking in commercial and multi-unit residential areas to minimize conflicts with automobiles and pedestrians.
20. Modify City street standards to incorporate bikeway features and guidelines.
21. Amend the parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance to establish standards for bicycle parking in all commercial and multi-unit residential zones, including incentives to promote bicycle security and preferential location.
22. Annually set aside a proportional share of the funds collected through the imposition of a Circulation Improvement Fee (see Implementation Program 16 for the development of the bike-way system and, as applicable, needed facilities).
23. Work with Sonoma County Transit to develop a transit center with park and ride facilities as a means of promoting transit use throughout Sonoma Valley.
24. Construct bus shelters along Highway 12 and other transit corridors. Design standards and locations for the shelters shall be developed.
25. Discretionary planning applications shall be evaluated in increasing opportunities for transit use, when relevant. This consideration may include design features, the provision of transit facilities, such as bus turnouts, and, where appropriate, increased densities.
26. The City shall continue to work for the designation of Frates Road as Route 116 and promote Route 116 as the primary

east/west regional route for the area.

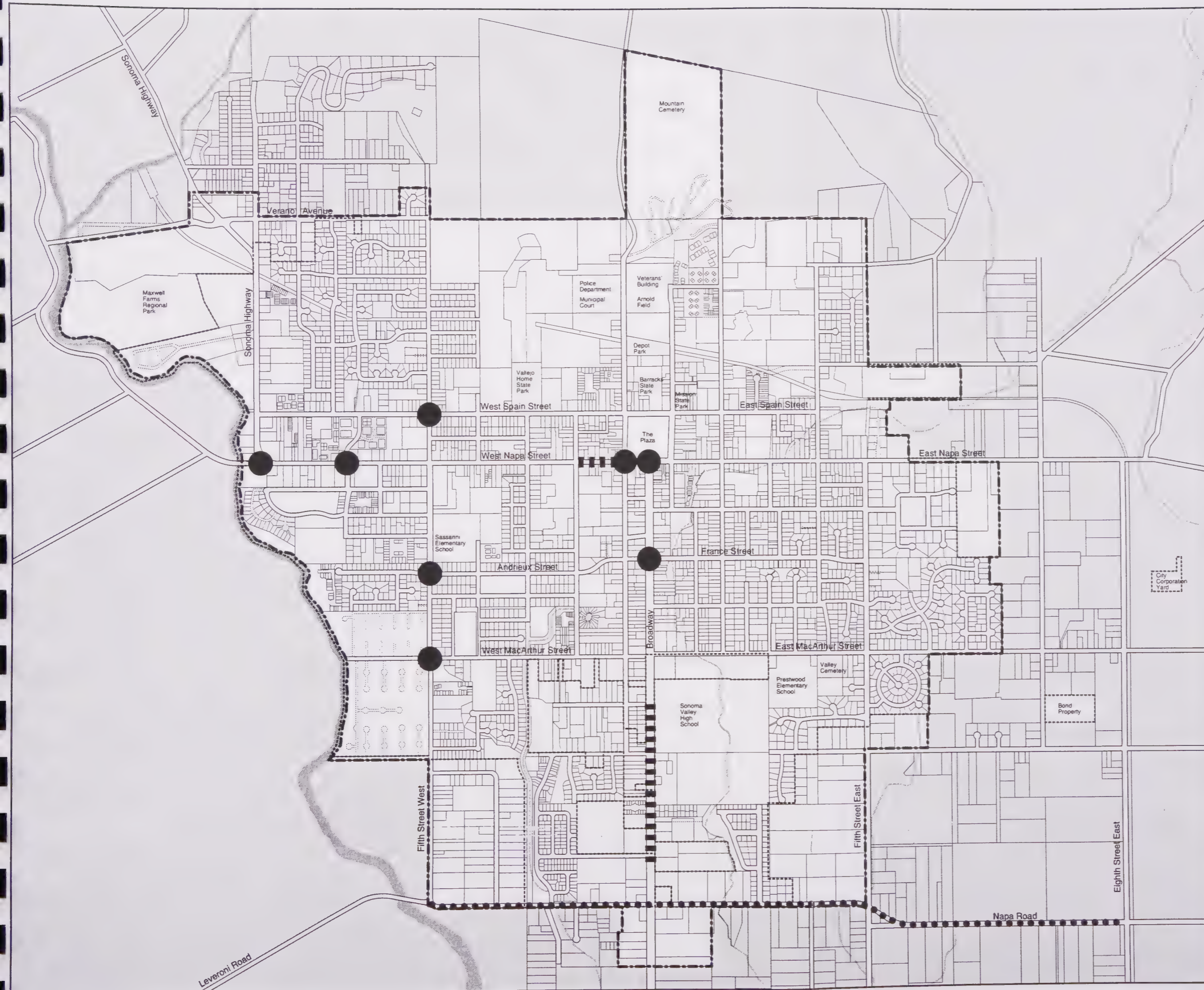
27. Excessive driveway cuts, on-street parking, and other factors that contribute to poor traffic flow shall be reduced when reasonable alternatives are available. Actions necessary to achieve these ends shall be identified and required through the planning process for new development and redevelopment.
28. Continue an aggressive program of street maintenance implemented through the Capital Improvement Program.
29. Conduct a traffic study, in cooperation with the Sonoma Valley High School, on the safety and circulation impacts caused by High School traffic in order to identify methods of increasing safety for students and protecting neighboring residential areas.
30. Establish setbacks and plan lines, as appropriate, to preserve and acquire needed right-of-way for future circulation improvements.
31. Work with the County and the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission to monitor development proposals in the unincorporated area to ensure compatibility with projected land use and traffic conditions and to avoid foreclosing options for circulation improvements.
32. Work to implement the circulation improvements recommended in the element on an as-needed basis through the Capital Improvement Program. Coordinate improvements with the County and Caltrans as appropriate.
33. Develop a broad phasing plan for the implementation of recommended improvements, with cost estimates and funding projections included.
34. Continue to implement the 1975 setback ordinance for right-of-way acquisition along West Napa Street and the Sonoma Highway in order to provide for potential future improvements.
35. The City and County shall negotiate with Caltrans in order to provide greater local control over the design and implementation of Highway 12 improvements in order to ensure that local needs as well as regional considerations are appropriately addressed.
36. Within one year of the adoption of the Circulation Element, develop a Circulation Improvement Fee to be assessed on all development in the city. Fee revenues would be used to fund

recommended improvements, including transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.

37. Work with the State Parks Department to retain the use of the Casa Grande lot for public parking.
38. Promote the use of off-street public parking, such as the Casa Grande lot, through the use of maps, sign programs, entrance lighting, and other improvements.
39. Continue negotiations with potentially affected property-owners with the purpose of acquiring land and developing publicly owned off-street parking facilities to serve the Plaza area.
40. Explore the feasibility of a jitney service linking off-street parking facilities to the Plaza.
41. Explore the feasibility of creating a downtown improvement district to provide a planning and funding mechanism for the acquisition and development of parking as well as other types of improvements.
42. Prior to implementation, the City Council shall review potential roadway improvements in terms of maintaining the historic and pedestrian character of the Plaza area.
43. Update the parking provisions of the Zoning Ordinance to better address handicapped parking, compact stalls, shared parking and driveways, and flexible parking requirements.
44. The City shall develop and periodically update street standards which address changing transportation needs and demands and encourage flexibility in design, appearance and function. The new standards shall address techniques for minimizing through-traffic on local streets, by such means as street width, intersection placement and control, and signs and traffic control devices.
45. Amend the Municipal Code to establish truck routes and regulations for delivery vehicles and tour buses.

Circulation Improvements

- ||||| Widening to Three lanes
- Turn Pockets at Intersections
- Intersection Improvement
- City Limit
- - - - - Sphere of Influence



City of Sonoma
Community Development Department

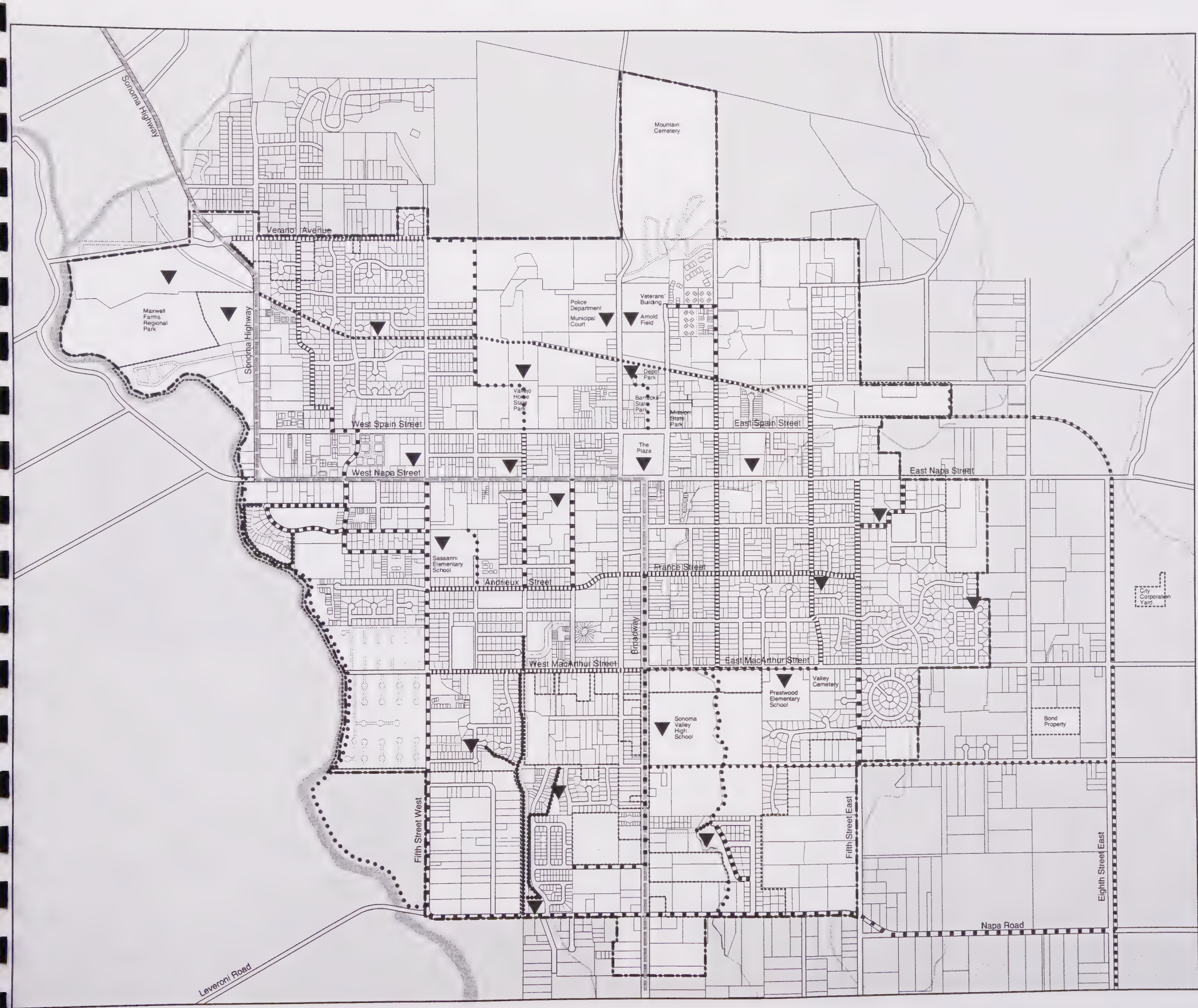


Bicycle Improvements

- Class 1, Existing
- Class 1, Proposed
- Class 2, Existing
- Class 2, Proposed
- Class 3, Proposed
- County/Caltrans Touring Route*
- ▼ Destination
- City Limit
- Sphere of Influence

*Class 1, unless otherwise indicated.

City of Sonoma
Community Development Department





Public Safety Element

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan



PUBLIC SAFETY

INTRODUCTION

The Public Safety Element is a required General Plan element combining the formerly mandated Seismic Safety and Public Safety elements, merged by the California State Legislature as of 1985. Its purpose is to incorporate public health and safety considerations into the community's long-range planning. By law, the Public Safety Element must identify and evaluate natural and man-made hazards present or potentially present in the community, and it must establish appropriate goals, policies and implementation measures necessary to reduce those hazards to acceptable levels. Hazards present in the City's Planning Area are identified and evaluated in a summary manner below and are further discussed in the background section of this element.

POTENTIAL RISKS

The most significant hazards present within the Planning Area are those created by earthquakes, fires, hazardous materials and floods. The risks posed by these hazards are summarized as follows:

- Earthquakes pose the most serious potential threat to the Planning Area, particularly the city, as urban areas are more prone to damage than less developed areas. Although no known faults traverse the Planning Area, Sonoma County is traversed by seven active or potentially active faults, including the infamous San Andreas fault (see figure 1). The Rodgers Creek fault, which has been identified as an extension of the Hayward fault, comes closest to the Planning Area and represents a significant earthquake risk.
- Fires, both urban and wildland, pose a significant potential threat. The closely packed wood-frame buildings around the Plaza, many of them without sprinklers, form an area of great concern. The risk of structure fires may increase in the future due to changes in land use patterns, such as an increased emphasis on infill and planned unit developments, if not mitigated through site planning and building design and retrofit requirements. The risk of a widespread structure fire is related to seismic risks in that major earthquakes in urban areas often cause conflagrations and make fire-fighting more difficult.
- The level of hazardous materials use within the Planning Area is unknown but probably relatively low. The area most likely to suffer an accident involving hazardous materials is the industrial strip along Eighth Street East and the Highway 12 corridor bisecting the Planning Area; however, such an accident could occur almost anywhere. At present, the risk of a large-scale incident is considered minor.

State Requirements

The inclusion of a "Safety Element" within the general plan is mandated by state law. At a minimum, the element must address:

- Seismic hazards, including surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure, liquefaction, and seiches.
- Other geologic hazards known to the community.
- Flooding.
- Urban and wildland fires.

Prior to the adoption of any revision to the safety element, the element must be reviewed by Division of Mines and Geology and the Office of Emergency Services.

(See Title 7, section 65302 (g), California Government Code.)



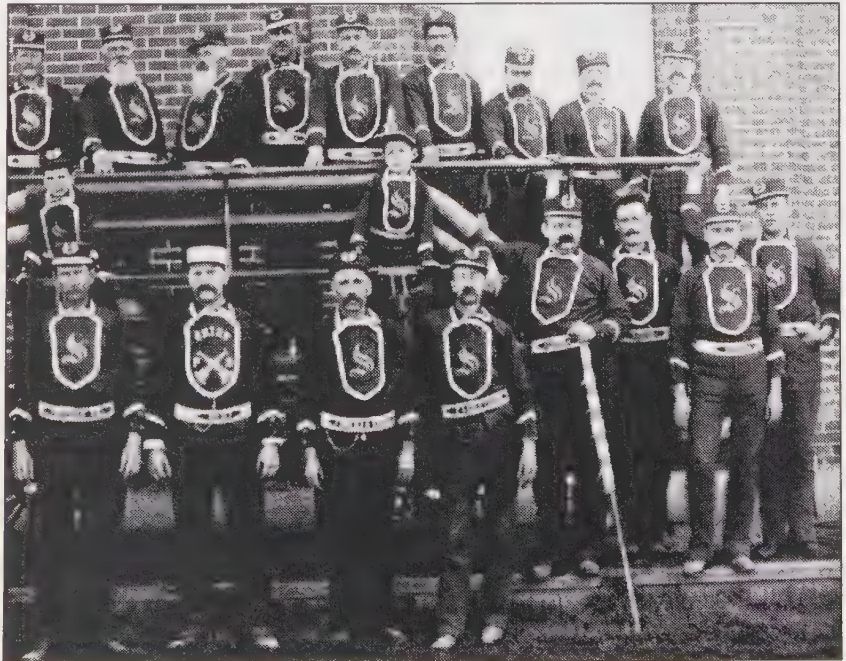
Fire Department

Sonoma's Fire Department, founded in 1888, has grown and changed to respond to changes in the larger community. Reflecting a national trend, the Fire Department, in recent years, found that responding to medical emergencies had become a substantial part of its work load. In recognition of the department's changing mission, the FireMed service was initiated in April of 1990. The Sonoma Valley FireMed Service responds to medical emergencies throughout Sonoma Valley. The use of fire-fighter/paramedics has proven to be a cost-effective way of meeting community medical needs while actually improving the department's fire-fighting capabilities.

- Flooding, even at its worst, presents only localized threats to property and little or no threat to life. Although some portions of urbanized areas lie within the 100-year flood plains, flood water heights rarely exceed one to two feet and flood control improvements have eliminated many former problems (see the map of Flood Plain Areas, page 206).
- Medical emergencies are, on the individual level, the greatest risk that most Sonomans face. Medical aid is provided by Sonoma Valley FireMed, an ambulance service operated through the City Fire Department (this service operates within the city and Sonoma Valley). By using fire-fighter/paramedics, the Fire Department has improved its emergency medical service to the community and upgraded its fire-fighting capabilities.

The risks posed by these hazards in the future will increase with the population, simply because more people will be exposed to them. The General Plan seeks to reduce risks to life and property through a variety of techniques but emphasizes prevention as the least expensive and most effective method. For example, the General Plan land use pattern minimizes risk by assigning very low densities to flood plains and sensitive hillsides.

A framework of risk reduction and hazard prevention is spelled out in the goals, policies and implementation programs to follow. Sonoma is a relatively safe community, even for a town located in earthquake country. The General Plan seeks to assure it will remain so.



EMERGENCY PLAN

In order to respond effectively to large-scale emergencies and disasters, such as earthquakes and flooding, it is vital to have an up-to-date emergency plan in place. The adoption of a local emergency plan is required by the state and federal government as a prerequisite to obtaining disaster relief funds following an emergency. It is not enough to have an adopted plan, however. Those who will use the plan in the event of an emergency must be familiar with the plan and the directions it contains. The regular exercise of simulations is critical to ensuring a successful response in the event of an actual emergency.

The Sonoma City Council, in March of 1994, adopted a fully revised emergency plan based on the principles of the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). This system provides a flexible structure for responding to emergencies of any size or nature, while ensuring full coordination with outside agencies. The system is designed to be expanded in an organized, modular fashion, as circumstances require. With the adoption of the plan, the City has begun exercising it in simulations, training key personnel in SEMS principles, and developing detailed annexes to facilitate responses to specific tasks and situations.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER ELEMENTS

As summarized below, the Public Safety Element is most closely related to the Community Development Element and the Environmental Resources Element.

Community Development Element: Development allowed through the land use designations defined in the Community Development Element and delineated on the Land Use Plan will be subject to policies and implementation measures set forth in the Public Safety Element with regard to ensuring earth-quake safe construction, fire safety, and flood prevention. Through limitations on the expansion of the city and policies and programs promoting infill development, the land use patterns called for in the Community Development Element could lead to an increased risk of structure fires if not adequately mitigated by safety requirements established through the Public Safety Element.

Environmental Resources Element: The Environmental Resources Element and the Public Safety Element complement one another by limiting development adjacent to creeks, restrictions which not only prevent flood damage but also help preserve riparian resources.

GOALS AND POLICIES

The goals and policies of the Public Safety Element focus on existing hazards within the Planning Area and are intended to minimize risks to life and property through prevention, preparedness and education. It is recognized that it is neither physically nor financially feasible to completely eliminate all risk; therefore, a balance is sought wherein risks are reduced to acceptable levels without either unwarranted expense or undue infringement of personal freedom.

Goal PSE-1 *Minimize risks to life and property posed by seismic and other geologic hazards.*

Policies:

1. *The City shall continue to require the submittal of soils and geology reports describing any potential geological or structural risk associated with development of a project site.*
2. *The City shall continue to require, as conditions of project approval, the incorporation of measures which eliminate or reduce to acceptable levels identified risks associated with relevant geologic hazards.*
3. *The City shall continue to implement its seismic retrofit program, enacting the state-mandated upgrade of unreinforced masonry structures.*
4. *All proposed critical and high priority facilities (including hospitals, convalescent homes, schools and community buildings (see background section for definitions) must be constructed in accordance with the latest adopted seismic and building codes.*
5. *The City shall require post-earthquake building replacement, reconstruction and rehabilitation to conform to the latest City codes and ordinances.*

Goal PSE-2 *Minimize hazards posed by fires, hazardous materials, and medical incidents and maintain a level of protection which safeguards life and property at a reasonable cost.*

Policies:

6. *The City Fire Department shall review and evaluate all development proposals in terms of adequacy of fire protection using, at a minimum, the following criteria:*
 - *Acceptable response time;*
 - *Adequate emergency access, water supply and fire flow;*
 - *Proper vegetation clearance and visible addressing;*

- Sufficient spacing between buildings;
- Appropriate construction materials;
- Proper refuse removal;
- Conformance with all applicable provisions of the City's Fire Flow and Life Safety Ordinances.

7. The City shall require compliance with the applicable hazardous materials regulations as a condition of receiving a business license.
8. In order to maximize its emergency medical service and fire-fighting capabilities, the Fire Department shall continue to recruit fire-fighter/paramedics for the Sonoma Valley FireMed system.
9. Continue efforts to coordinate and, where feasible and appropriate, consolidate fire services within Sonoma Valley.
10. The City Fire Department shall strive to maintain a fire insurance rating of four or less.
11. The Fire Department shall continue to use volunteer fire-fighters as a major component of its emergency services delivery system

Goal PSE-3 Protect the community from risks to life and property posed by flooding.

Policies:

12. The City shall continue working to eliminate local flooding by upgrading and expanding the storm drain system.
13. All new developments shall install underground storm drains and storm drain improvements as deemed necessary by the Director of Public Works and the Sonoma County Water Agency.
14. The City shall continue working with the Sonoma County Water Agency in developing environmentally acceptable methods of reducing or preventing flooding within the Planning Area.
15. The City shall require a hydrology study for any development proposed on a parcel within the 100 year flood plain (see Figure 2).

Goal PSE-4 Ensure that essential emergency and public services will function effectively in a disaster.

Policies:

16. The City shall use the Standardized Emergency Management System as the basis of its emergency planning.

17. *The City shall continue to review, update and exercise the City Emergency Plan as necessary.*
18. *The City shall continue to promote awareness of the Emergency Plan and its recommendations.*
19. *The City shall continue to coordinate its emergency planning efforts with other relevant jurisdictions, agencies, and groups.*

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

The City Council, in its annual review of the General Plan, shall assign implementation priorities and responsibilities for those measures which are not already ongoing.

1. Review and revise applicable zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that all future developments minimize cut and fill, tree removal, site coverage and creation of impervious surfaces.
2. In coordination with the Schell-Vista Fire District, monitor development in the Eighth Street East area with regard to fire safety and hazardous materials.
3. Continue to reduce fire hazards through education and prevention using the following methods: a) Fire Prevention Week Program; b) other public education programs; c) ongoing building inspection program.
4. Investigate the modification of criteria for the requirement of fire-sprinklers in order to respond to changing patterns of development (i.e., greater emphasis on higher density, infill projects).
5. Maintain contingency plans for responding to spills, accidents, and fires involving hazardous materials.
6. Complete the annexes to the City's Emergency Plan and ensure that the plan is kept up-to-date.
7. Continue training key personnel in emergency management and the Standardized Emergency Management System, especially emergency response personnel and those responsible for staffing the emergency operations center.
8. Establish a program for surveying privately owned historic buildings in and around the Plaza area. Identify sites where improvements are needed and seek ways to assist private owners in rehabilitation of their buildings.

9. Maintain mutual and automatic aid agreements with the other fire departments in Sonoma Valley.
10. Continue cross-training exercises with all Sonoma Valley fire departments.
11. Investigate the feasibility of establishing a neighborhood emergency response team program and other volunteer programs to help cope with public emergencies.
12. Establish an educational program to identify residences potentially subject to greater seismic risk (e.g., units constructed prior to 1976 and mobile homes) and inform owners of methods to improve bracing and other safety measures.
13. Review and modify the standard conditions of project approval to ensure that, in all new development, adequate storm drain facilities are provided, a fair-share contribution is made to the implementation of the Sonoma Area Master Drainage Plan, and construction is evaluated for conformance with Water Agency standards.



Noise Element

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan



NOISE

PURPOSE

The Noise Element is one of the seven state-required General Plan elements. Noise, which is defined as unwanted sound, can have a variety of adverse effects, ranging from interference with sleep and conversation to hearing loss. The purpose of this element is two-fold:

- To provide quantified data about Sonoma's existing and projected noise environment; and,
- To provide planning criteria for evaluating the noise environment of future developments and the compatibility between existing and future land uses.

The technical data which supports the goals and policies of the Noise Element are contained in the Technical Appendix. In addition to information and a glossary of technical terms, the Noise section of the appendix includes a Noise Assessment Guide which will assist the City in flagging possible noise problems and evaluating the need for project-specific acoustical studies.

EXISTING SETTING AND FUTURE CONDITIONS

Compared with many other Bay Area cities, Sonoma is a quiet town. Approximately 90% of the community lives in areas that are substantially below the State standard for acceptable outdoor noise levels. Potential sources of significant noise fall into two categories: 1) vehicular noise associated with major streets; 2) stationary sources, such as airports, industrial facilities, carwashes, and loading areas associated with commercial facilities.

Currently, the primary source of noise in the city is motor vehicle traffic. Within the Planning Area, noise generated by vehicular traffic is greatest along Highway 12, Leveroni Road, Napa Road, Napa Street, and Eighth Street East. Existing noise levels along these streets were measured and projections of future noise levels developed based on projected traffic volumes. Based on these projections, it appears that increases in noise levels along these roadways associated with projected traffic volumes in the year 2005 will not exceed 2 dBA (see page 102 for summary definitions of the technical terms used in this element).

With regard to stationary sources, there is no airport within city limits, and no major industrial or manufacturing facility which constitutes a significant noise source. Until about 1990, many noise complaints focused on the Sebastiani Winery operation on Fourth Street East; however, the installation of several noise attenuation features and the relocation of bulk wine production to other facilities has substantially reduced obtrusive noises from this

State Requirements

State law mandates the inclusion of a noise element within the General Plan in order to "... identify and appraise noise problems within the community." The element must provide the following:

- *A quantified analysis of of current and projected noise levels associated with highways, arterials, and primary local streets, commercial and general aviation facilities, railroad operations, local industrial plants, and other significant known noise sources within the community.*
- *Noise contour lines for all such sources identified within the community, to be used in establishing land use patterns which minimize exposure to excessive noise for residents of the community.*
- *Implementation measures and possible solutions addressing existing and foreseeable noise problems.*

The noise element must also serve as a guideline for the implementation of state noise insulation standards.

(See Title 7, section 65302 (f), California Government Code.)

Definitions

The measurement and evaluation of noise levels involves the use of many technical terms. Summary definitions of the more commonly used terms in the Noise Element are as follows:

- **Decibel (dB):** A unit describing the amplitude of sound.
- **A-weighted Sound Level (dBA):** A measure of sound which is weighted to reflect the response of the human ear.
- **Equivalent Noise Level (Leq):** The average A-weighted sound level during a given measurement period (e.g. 24 hours).
- **Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL):** The average A-weighted noise level over a 24-hour period, weighted to emphasize noise which occurs in the evening and at night
- **Ambient Noise Level:** The composite of noise from near and far sources. The normal or existing level of environmental noise at a given location.
- **Intrusive Noise:** Noise which intrudes over and above the existing ambient at a given location.

Complete definitions are provided in the noise section of the Technical Appendix (page 207).

establishment to the extent that it no longer constitutes a significant source of noise within the community.

Increases in future noise levels will be due primarily to increased traffic volumes. Some longtime residents indicate they have noticed significant increases in traffic noise over the years. One such resident was found to live in an area where the traffic noise level was substantially below the limit considered acceptable by the California State Noise Standards for outdoor noise levels (60dB Ldn). This illustrates that, in quiet places, unfavorable reactions to growth can be generated even when standards are met. Thus, planning for the city will require careful evaluation of potential noise problems to minimize conflicts and preserve ambient community noise levels that are in keeping with the town's character.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER ELEMENTS

The Noise Element is most closely related to the Community Development Element and the Circulation Element.

Community Development Element: Development allowed through the land use designations defined in the Community Development Element and delineated on the Land Use Plan will be subject to policies and implementation measures set forth in the Noise Element with regard to the location and buffering of residential and other noise-sensitive development. Policies and implementation measures in the Community Development with regard to town design and zoning will be used to create development regulations incorporating procedures and design recommendations which implement the standards set forth in the Noise Element. In addition, the land use patterns called for in the Land Use Plan give rise to the projected traffic conditions which form the basis of estimated future noise levels along major streets.

Circulation Element: The Circulation Element details existing and projected traffic conditions. These traffic volumes were used to identify existing and project noise levels along major roadways.

GOALS AND POLICIES

The goals, policies and implementation programs contained in this element reflect the desire of the community to maintain the city's quiet noise environment. A key feature of the implementation program is the Noise Assessment Guide, set forth in the technical appendix. This is a planning tool that can be used early on in the project approval process to determine the possibility of noise conflicts and the need for detailed acoustical studies. The Noise section of the technical appendix also provides definitions to the technical terms used to describe and measure noise.

GOAL 1: *Achieve noise compatibility between new and existing developments to ensure the continuation of the prevailing quiet country atmosphere that residents associate with living in Sonoma.*

Policies:

1. *The following standards for maximum Ldn levels will apply to citywide development (see glossary in Noise section of the technical appendix for definition of Ldn and Table 8 for more information on Ldn standards):*
 - 45 Ldn *For interior environments in all residential units.*
 - 60 Ldn *For exterior environments around all residential developments and outdoor public facilities (e.g., parks).*
 - 65Ldn *For exterior environments around commercial and public buildings (libraries and churches).*
 - 70 Ldn *For exterior environments around industrial buildings.*
2. *The City may impose more restrictive noise standards in neighborhoods that may be sensitive to noise levels below the accepted State standards.*
3. *All proposed residential subdivisions shall be evaluated to determine the need for an acoustical study. The process outlined in the Noise Assessment Guide shall be followed to identify projects which may not meet established standards. An acoustical study will be required when it is not obvious that a proposed project can mitigate potential noise impacts.*
4. *An acoustical analysis shall contain the following:*
 - a. *A summary of noise data collected, including identification of noise sources and their characteristics, a description of the methodology used to determine noise levels and quantification of existing and future noise levels on the site (in Ldn).*
 - b. *Figures illustrating the topological relationship of noise sources and the project site.*
 - c. *The impacts of existing and future noise levels on the project and the impacts of the project on noise levels in the surrounding area, based on the standards adopted in this element.*
 - d. *Specifications for noise mitigation measures and an analysis of their effectiveness in mitigating noise levels to accepted standards.*

5. *The City will encourage all developments to minimize noise intrusions through project design. Such measures include:*
 - a. *Locating usable outdoor areas (yards, patios, balconies) and noise-sensitive indoor areas (bedrooms, living rooms, windows) where noise levels will be lowest.*
 - b. *Locating noise-compatible uses (open space, parking garages, other buildings) to shield noise-sensitive uses (residences, hospitals, convalescent homes) from major noise sources.*
 - c. *Using berms, walls, fences, setbacks and dense plantings to shield projects from noise sources.*
6. *Buses and trucks parked anywhere in the city for longer than five minutes shall shut off their engines. This does not apply to buses or trucks during the time they are unloading or loading passengers or goods.*
7. *New commercial or industrial development with the potential to produce excessive noise in relation to residential and other noise sensitive uses shall be evaluated to ensure that community noise standards are met.*
8. *As part of project review, mixed use developments shall be evaluated in terms of design, operation, and other relevant characteristics to determine whether special conditions of approval or changes in the development and site plan should be required to mitigate potential noise conflicts.*

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

1. Establish a noise ordinance which incorporates the noise standards set forth in this element. Include a requirement that buses and trucks parked anywhere in the city for more than five minutes must shut down their engines (except to load and unload passengers or goods).
2. Monitor noise complaint reports annually to determine if existing regulations are maintaining acceptable community-wide noise levels.
3. Incorporate the Noise Assessment Guide into the City's project review process.
4. Incorporate noise buffering measures and criteria in the development of the Town Design Guidelines and the in the revision of the zoning ordinance and other applicable regulations.

Technical Appendix

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan





Town Design

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan



TOWN DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

Community character may be described as the physical and social elements that shape an environment and the relationships between the two that create a “sense of place.” The physical elements are a blend of the natural and built environment that defines the appearance and feeling of a city or town. The social elements are the people and the activities they undertake that comprise a community. Together, they create what we all look for in a community—a feeling of home, an interesting place to live and work, and a place that is aesthetically pleasing to both residents and visitors. It is the intent of the goals and policies of the General Plan to guide the development of the physical environment and enhance the natural environment so that the desired sense of community can be achieved.

In a general sense, Sonoma is perceived as a beautiful, semi-rural town with an historic and cultural background that makes it a desirable place to live and visit. More specifically, this perception is built by the components that make the community unique - the landscape, the Plaza and downtown, residential areas, gateways, pockets of open space, “getting around” the town, and public art. These elements, taken individually, are what makes this community unique. Taken as a whole, they comprise our “sense of place.”



Sonoma's Mission San Francisco de Solano is one of several immediately identifiable landmarks which contribute to the town's distinct identity.

THE LANDSCAPE

The hills to the north and northeast and the surrounding agricultural lands to the west, southeast and south of town serve to provide a visual backdrop and a natural boundary to Sonoma. These features make an important contribution to the creation and

retention of Sonoma's semi-rural character, forming a greenbelt around the city. From many vantage points throughout the community, one has a view of the oak-studded hillsides. Under the 1985 General Plan and now the 1995 General Plan, policies and land use designations have been used to preserve these areas as open space with little development. The creeks and associated riparian corridors that traverse the town from the north to the south add native vegetation and habitats that further enhance the visual quality of Sonoma. The abundance of trees and other natural landscaping augments the hillsides and creekside landscaping and enhances the feeling of being in a natural environment.

THE PLAZA/DOWNTOWN AREA

The Plaza and downtown area is the hub of activity in Sonoma, with the Plaza as the focal point. Historic public, commercial and residential sites and buildings are concentrated in the downtown. The overall development pattern originates from the grid street system, which dates back to the early 19th century. A strong effort has been made to preserve the historic buildings on and around the square and to ensure that new commercial development complements the architecture, bulk and scale of the historic buildings. The historic development pattern makes a critical contribution to the style and the feeling of central Sonoma. It is also, in part, what has made and continues to make Sonoma the vital community that it is today.

The Pinelli Building, built in the 1800's, is one of the many historic structures which ring the Plaza.



In 1979, the League for Historic Preservation conducted a comprehensive survey of the historic sites and structures in the valley, including the City of Sonoma. The survey identified 395 such locations in Sonoma, including residences, commercial buildings, sites, farm buildings and cottages. Local General Plan policies, programs and land use designations, such as the Historic Overlay

zoning designation, as well as state and federal programs implemented through the Sonoma Plaza National Historic Landmark designation, are vital tools for the on-going preservation and enhancement of these historic sites in the community. The General Plan and the zoning ordinance includes provisions to ensure that the cultural and aesthetic value of historic sites and structures are preserved and enhanced.

GATEWAYS

There are two main gateways, or entry points, to the city: 1) Four Corners, at Broadway/Napa Road; and, 2) at Sonoma Highway/Verano Avenue. The Broadway entrance from the south is the more attractive. Entering Sonoma from Broadway, one sees the hillside backdrop straight ahead, towering eucalyptus trees to the right, and mature street trees to the left. Approaching the Plaza, one notes the Victorian homes, no longer serving as residences but still active as stores and offices. With the historic Plaza and City Hall building as the focal point of the route, the journey up Broadway is a marvelous introduction to Sonoma.



This row of Eucalyptus trees lining south Broadway frames views of the hills and the Plaza.

The Sonoma Highway entrance is quite different in appearance. This area of Sonoma is patterned in a strip-commercial fashion notable mainly for its lack of distinctive character. Efforts to ensure that the architecture reflects the community's historic style and to provide landscaping and street-level signs have been inconsistent and largely unsuccessful. Opportunities for improving this gateway, which come about when applications for development review are submitted to the City, include capitalizing on the landscape feature that Maxwell Farms Regional Park provides and improving upon the elements that make this area of town appear cluttered.

Although these are the two primary gateways to Sonoma, the General Plan identifies other potential gateways in the Town Design section of the Community Development Element.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Sonoma enjoys a mix of housing types, from older residences with historical designations to newer multi-family developments. Individual neighborhoods are distinctive in terms of the variety of architectural styles in each area, but common elements such as the grid system, mature street trees, and the views of the hills provide a sense of continuity and community throughout Sonoma. There are a variety of architectural styles and periods of home construction that make up the neighborhoods, from ornate Victorian homes to the simple lines of adobe structures.

POCKETS OF OPEN SPACE

The term “open space” includes a variety of land categories. State planning guidelines provide specific definitions for different types of open space. “Pockets” of open space are defined here as small parcels of undeveloped or partially-developed vacant land within city limits. These pockets of land contribute to the rural character of Sonoma and serve as reminders of the community’s agricultural heritage. They also provide vistas to the surrounding hillsides and agricultural areas. Parks may also be thought of as small open spaces, in that their purpose is to provide a place to be outside and enjoy the community’s natural characteristics.

The unique character of the Castagnasso property is primarily attributable to its owner, who continues to use it as a working farm, albeit a small one. The charm of the farm buildings on the property stems from the fact that they are still being used for their intended purpose.



GETTING AROUND SONOMA

The primary transportation route in Sonoma is made up of Broadway, West Napa Street and Sonoma Highway. This circulation corridor is a fundamental element in the visual perception of

the town. Whether residents are using the corridor to get around town or visitors are using it to visit or travel through, the views from this corridor provide a first and a lasting aesthetic impact. The grid street system stems from this primary route and provides the network for vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian transportation. Elements of the original grid are found in most of the city's neighborhoods, although newer residential developments often feature curvilinear streets.



A grid street system is not only easy to understand and get around on, it also provides great views.

The Circulation Element of the General Plan includes goals and policies addressing roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements. The primary urban design issue associated with such improvements is how to provide the improvements and promote alternative means of transportation, and, at the same time, embellish the visual quality of the transportation network. One way of doing this might be to introduce visual elements that unify Sonoma Highway and West Napa Street with Broadway, creating the perception of one continuous thoroughfare and principal element of community identity. There are many examples that could help achieve such an effect, including landscaping, undergrounding utilities, a consistent sign program, lighting and street furniture, and pavement and sidewalk patterns. However, the constraints of the existing roadway right-of-way and development pattern must be taken into consideration in any recommendations for the implementation of circulation improvements.

PUBLIC ART

Public art provides a connection between the physical and social aspects of the community and what has been or can be created by its people. Whether it is a representation of an historical person, event, or site, or simply an artistic contribution to the visual environment, art in public places softens the built environment and



This bas-relief was installed as part of a classroom addition at the St. Francis de Solano school.

further the civilizing goals of good architecture and landscaping. Other forms of public art include performing and visual arts and art programs. However, while there are many public and privately sponsored programs for cultural and art events in Sonoma, the City currently does not have a public art program.

Outdoor public art in the community includes the Bear Flag Monument, murals, and the Italian Fountain. For performing arts, there are four primary facilities for events within the city: the Veterans' Memorial Building, Andrews Hall in the Community Center, the Sebastiani Theatre, and the Grinstead Memorial Amphitheater in the Plaza. While these facilities are well-used and enjoyed, each has constraints on how and when they can be used and limitations of size and/or condition. For the visual arts, the Depot Museum provides an historic perspective of Sonoma. The building is owned by the City, while the museum itself is owned and operated by the Sonoma Valley Historical Society.

Other public or quasi-public facilities in Sonoma include the library and the displays located at the city's state park historic facilities. In addition, the Cultural and Fine Arts Commission, a City Council-appointed board, administers a variety of public art programs, including grant programs, exhibits, lectures, the Sonoma Treasure, and the Cinco de Mayo festival. Finally, private galleries also provide a medium for the display of local artists' work. The Sonoma Arts Guild, for example, showcases local art and serves as a de facto gallery for many residents.

There are also a number of arts-oriented events on the Plaza sponsored by various non-profit organizations, including the Vintage Festival and Salute to the Arts. Private organizations that provide programs for the public on an ongoing basis include the Boys and Girls Club, Vintage House Senior Center, the Community Center (individuals and organizations operate classes and programs out of the center), as well as local performing arts groups, including the Avalon Players, the Sonoma Vintage Theatre and the Sonoma Opera Company.



Local Economy

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan



Errata Sheet

Table 9 (page 112) has been revised to reflect the correct figures for gross taxable sales in fiscal year 1993/1994.

The figure for total gross taxable sales (page 111) has been revised accordingly.

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LOCAL ECONOMY

INTRODUCTION

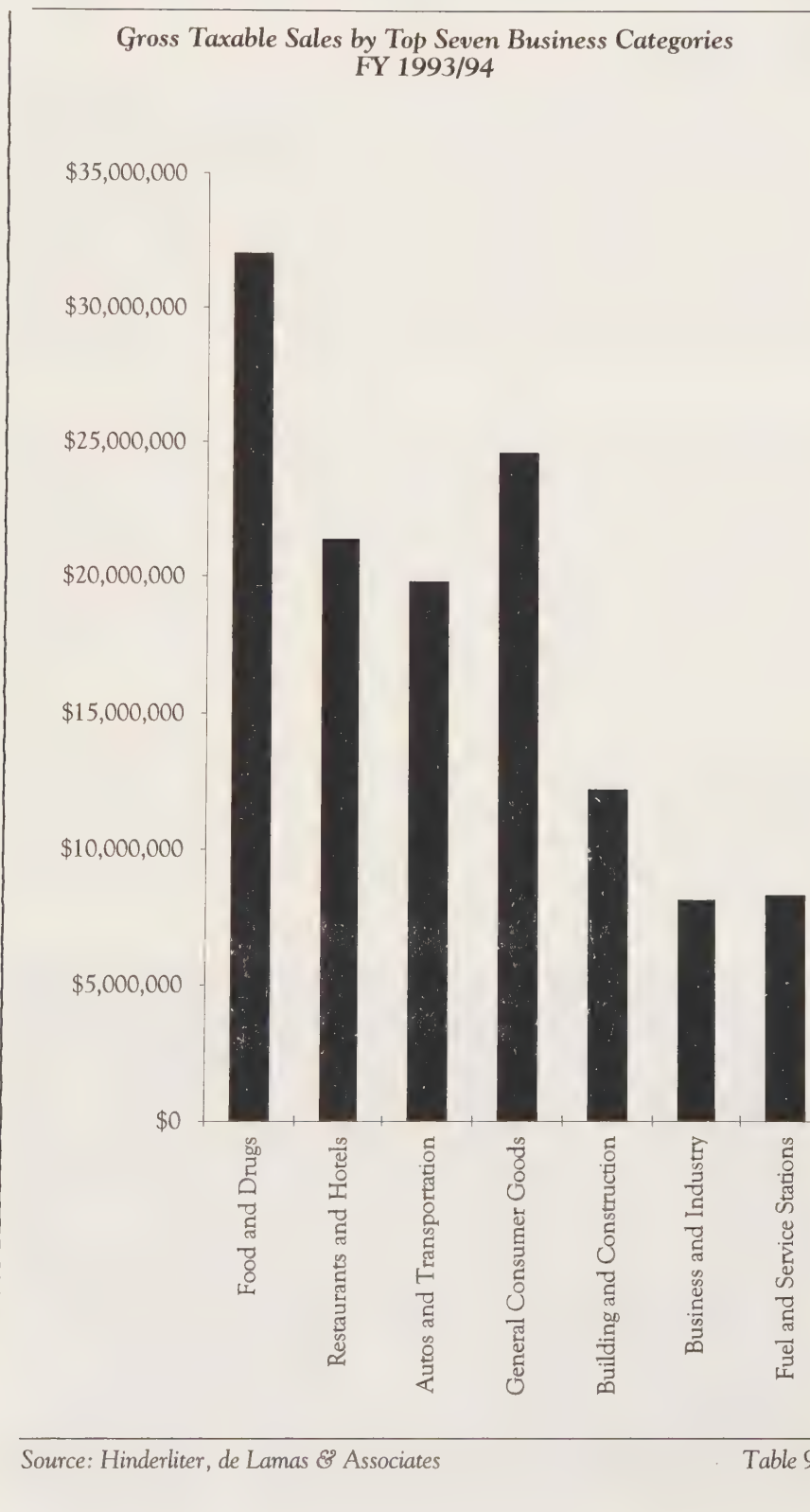
The Sonoma business community is a diverse group, ranging from “Mom and Pop” stores on the Plaza to the Sebastiani Winery. According to recent information based on business licenses, there are approximately 700 businesses in Sonoma. The typical retail firm has a working proprietor and only one or two full-time employees, and has been operating in its current location for nine years. Although most Sonoma businesses are small, with about 70% having two or fewer full-time employees, the seven largest industries in the local business community generated more than 126.5 million dollars in gross sales during fiscal year 1993/94.

Sonoma’s economic activity is critical to the livelihood of local business owners and employees, many of whom are residents, and is equally important to the life of the community as a whole. Many aspects of the city’s quality of life, so prized by those who live here, are directly related to the health of the local economy. The wide array of restaurants is one example, the agricultural greenbelt is another. Basic city services, such as police and fire protection, rely on locally generated revenues. Sales, business, bed, and property taxes make up more than 80% of the City’s General Fund revenues, from which most city services are funded.

Commerce in Sonoma is by no means exclusively driven by city residents. Sonoma serves as the commercial hub of Sonoma Valley, which has a total population (including the city) of approximately 36,000 residents. Tourism also plays an important part in the local economy: according to the Chamber of Commerce, nearly 1 million visitors come to Sonoma Valley each year, and many of them spend much if not all of their time in the city.



The agricultural component of the valley’s economy is by no means limited to grapes and wine. Dairy is also an important element. Shown on the left is the Vella Cheese company, whose products have earned an international reputation for quality.



LOCAL ECONOMY

INTRODUCTION

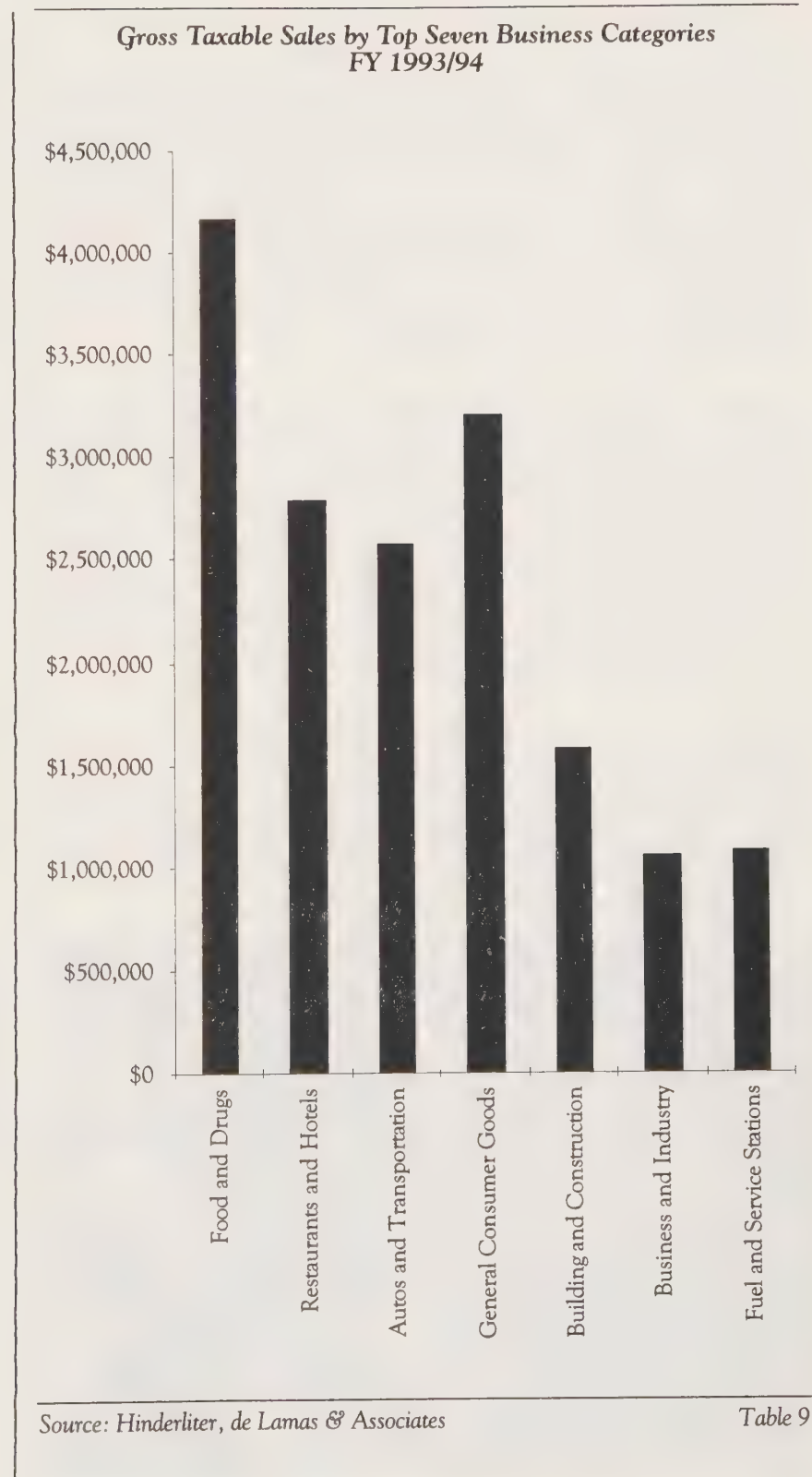
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The agricultural component of the valley's economy is by no means limited to grapes and wine. Dairy is also an important element. Shown on the right is the Vella Cheese company, whose products have earned an international reputation for quality.



As shown in the table on the facing page, the list of the top business categories in Sonoma in terms of sales receipts is headed by food and drug sales, followed by restaurants and hotels, autos and transportation, and general consumer goods. These four business categories accounted for 77% of all taxable sales in Sonoma in fiscal year 1993/94. (These sales do not include non-taxable items, such as food staples, or personal and professional services.)

PATTERNS OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Based on a 1993 inventory of commercial development, there is approximately 2 million square feet of occupied commercial space within city limits. Of this amount, retail uses account for 23%, office uses for 16%, hotels and restaurants for 14%, services for 9%, and medical uses for 26%. The Sebastiani Winery, which has an extremely large physical plant, accounts for about 9% of the developed commercial space, although most of its area is devoted to production and storage. For the most part, commercial uses are clustered in four areas: the Plaza, south Broadway and Four Corners, West Napa Street/Fifth Street West, and West Napa Street/Sonoma Highway.

The Plaza: The pueblo of Sonoma was established in 1835, and the Plaza has served as the downtown ever since. There is about 580,000 square feet of commercial space in the Plaza area (defined in this instance as the two-hour parking zone). Of that amount, 35% is devoted to retail uses, 23% to offices, 26% to hotels and restaurants, and 12% to services. Most businesses in the Plaza are small, and the retail firms tend to be specialized. Current General Plan policies call for the Plaza to be maintained as a focal point for small-scale businesses and to preserve a balance of resident and visitor-serving uses in the area.



An older residence now used as an office is a typical development pattern found along Broadway.

South Broadway/Four Corners: The characteristic business on Broadway is the former residence converted to office use. There is approximately 200,000 square feet of commercial space in this area, of which nearly half (47%) is devoted to offices. While

Broadway is nearly built out, the majority of vacant or underutilized land designated for commercial development is located in the Four Corners area. The 1995 General Plan calls for the area to be developed with 1) retail, so that residents in the southern and eastern areas of Sonoma need not travel through the downtown in order to shop, and 2) additional visitor-serving facilities, including lodgings.

West Napa Street/Fifth Street West: This area extends from Second Street West to Fifth Street West. With nearly 1 million square feet, it contains the largest share of commercial space in Sonoma. Although the most prominent uses in this area are shopping centers—including the Market Place, Vallemart, and Safeway—more than half of the building area (67%) is devoted to medical uses. The Sonoma Valley Hospital, one of the largest single employers in the city, accounts for most of the space, but there are several other medical complexes in the area, most notably the Perkins Street Medical Center.

West Napa Street/Sonoma Highway: Extending from Seventh Street West on the south, along the Sonoma Highway, to the northern city limits (just south of Verano Avenue), this area is characterized by strip commercial development. There is approximately 170,000 square feet of commercial building area in this section, more than half of which (92,000 square feet) is found in the Maxwell Village shopping center, the city's newest.

BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS

A 1987 survey (part of the document entitled *Economic and Land Use Planning for the Travel Industry in Sonoma*) provides the most comprehensive and up-to-date picture of local businesses currently available. The survey found that businesses in Sonoma tend to be small, with only about 6% having more than three full-time employees. Almost 90% of all businesses have a working proprietor, which reduces the need for additional employees. Those businesses with more employees tend to be restaurants, hotels, and general retailers (such as grocery stores), although all of these categories include small businesses as well. Institutions also account for a significant amount of local employment, including the School District, which employs 475 people, and the Sonoma Valley Hospital, which employs 500 people. The business community is relatively stable: 60% of local businesses have been at their present location for two to nine years, and 25% have been in place for ten years or more.

TOURISM

Tourism is a dominant part of the local economy, even for types of business which are not, strictly speaking, tourist-oriented, but

which benefit from the increased activity that tourism provides. There are no precise statistics on the number of visitors to Sonoma each year, but there are many indicators. For example, the Sebastiani Winery estimated that nearly 200,000 visitors toured its facility in 1984. In that same year, more than 300,000 people visited the various state parks in Sonoma. In addition to its history and its wineries, Sonoma also offers various events which can attract large numbers of tourists. The annual Salute to the Arts festival, for instance, is attended by an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 people each day (including both residents and tourists).

About half of the visitors to Sonoma come from California, with half of those traveling from within the Bay Area. Many of the visitors are repeat visitors. According to a survey conducted as part of a 1988 study of the local travel industry, about half of all visitors had visited Sonoma previously. The survey found that nearly half the visitors (49%) stay in the area at least one night, that most travel by car (only 2.6% use a bus or van), and that the average daily expenditure per party was an estimated \$146.00. The survey showed a wide variation in expenditures, depending on the length of stay. Visiting parties on a day trip spent an average of \$94.00 per day, while those staying overnight spent an average of \$132.00 to \$219.00, depending on whether they stayed with friends or relatives or at a hotel. The travel industry study estimated that tourism and tourism-related activities generated 19 million dollars in business receipts, a 3.3 million dollar payroll, and 325 jobs (including full-time and part-time employees, but not working proprietors). Retail establishments were identified as the largest recipient of the tourist dollar, followed by eating and drinking establishments.

Income from tourism varies considerably depending on the business type and location, as was demonstrated by the 1987 local business survey. For accommodations firms, including hotels and bed and breakfast establishments, more than 90% of receipts are attributable to tourism. For a restaurant, the estimate was 33%, and for a typical retailer, the figure was about 23%. Businesses on the Plaza estimated that almost 27% of their receipts were directly or indirectly attributable to tourism, while for those located elsewhere in the city, the estimate was only 7%. Tourism also has costs. Many residents avoid the Plaza during weekends and special events in order to escape crowds and traffic congestion. There are also public sector costs, such as increased road and park maintenance and police and fire calls. In 1986, it was estimated that these costs amounted to about \$130,000.

TRENDS

Although Sonoma has avoided severe problems during the current recession, local businesses did not escape unscathed. According to



The Sebastiani Winery, with 130 full-time employees, is a major local employer.

local real-estate professionals, turnover increased and vacancies took longer to fill. Tourism remained strong, but, according to the director of the Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau, tourists spent less and took longer to confirm bookings. The economic downturn had another effect on the local community: the State of California, in order to balance its own budget, kept for itself revenues that were normally transferred to the City and County. This translates into fewer local government services and/or higher fees for those services.

With the end of the recession, the diversity of Sonoma's economy places it in a strong position. The Association of Bay Area Governments is predicting continued strong job growth in the long term, especially in the retail sector. However, if projected economic growth is to occur, improvements in basic services and infrastructure must be made.



Housing

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan



HOUSING

POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Population: From 1980, when it had a population of 6,054, to 1995, Sonoma grew to 8,937 residents, adding 2,883 persons over a 15-year period. This increase, including growth from births, new housing, and annexations, averages out to an annual growth rate of about 3%. In comparing the Sonoma of 1980 to the Sonoma of 1990 (years for which detailed census information is available), several observations may be made:

- The average household size has shrunk from 2.16 persons per household to 2.05, much smaller than that of the county as a whole, which had an average household size of 2.55 in 1990.
- The median age has decreased, from 49.4 in 1980 to 44.8 in 1990. Compared to the county as whole, Sonoma has an older population. The county-wide median age in 1990 was 34.8.
- Women make up an increasing percentage of the population, rising from 55.8% in 1980 to 56.3% in 1990.
- In terms of ethnicity, Sonoma has changed little. Caucasians made up 96.6% of the population in 1990, compared to 97.3% in 1980.

The general impression is one of stability. Sonoma has experienced steady but moderate growth, and the composition of the population has changed only incrementally. The one surprise is the decrease in the median age, which may be the result of a greater proportion of professionals moving to Sonoma and a reduction in the percentage of retiree's.

State housing element law requires that each jurisdiction address future conditions in terms of the projections provided by its local Council of Governments, which for Sonoma is the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). In ABAG's *Projections '92*, a set of regional forecasts for the entire Bay Area, the population of Sonoma had been predicted to grow by 1,037 residents between 1990 and 1995 (207 new residents per year), with another 4,400 residents added between 1995 and 2010. Since actual population growth from 1990 to 1995 averaged only 163 residents per year, it seems unlikely that ABAG's projections will be fully realized.

In addition to the recently concluded recession, short-term constraints on growth include a shortage of school capacity and a lack of sewer availability. While the school district and the sanitation district have developed and begun to implement programs to address needs in these areas, these programs will take time to fully implement. Over the long term, Sonoma's Growth Management Ordinance, which limits residential development to an average of

Some Definitions:

ABAG: Association of Bay Area Governments. A regional planning agency encompassing the nine Bay Area counties.

CDA: Community Development Agency. The City of Sonoma's Redevelopment Agency, which by state law must spend 20% of its funds on the provision of affordable housing.

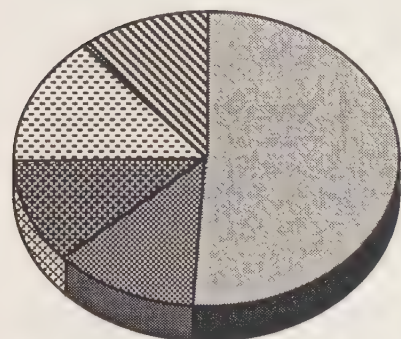
CDBG: Community Development Block Grant. A federal funding program, it is one of the few sources of federal money available to the City.

FHA: Federal Housing Administration. A federal agency providing loans and grants for improvement projects and low income housing in rural areas.

GMO: Growth Management Ordinance. Sonoma's residential growth control system. Adopted in 1980, it limits residential development to an average of 100 units per year.

HUD: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. A cabinet-level federal department responsible for housing programs.

**Housing Types in Sonoma
(1995)**



Single-Family Detached:
51%

Single-Family Attached:
12%

Multi-Family (2-4 units):
11%

Multi-Family (5+ units):
15%

Mobile Homes:
11%

Source: Department of
Finance

Table 10

100 units per year, will continue to restrict the pace of future development.

Projected Jobs, by Sector

	1990	1995	2000	2005
Agriculture and Mining:	260	300	260	270
Manufacturing & Wholesale:	960	1,020	1,040	1,120
Retail:	2,130	2,190	2,260	2,420
Service:	2,040	2,330	2,390	2,430
Other:	850	980	1,030	1,080
Total:	6,240	6,820	6,980	7,320

Source: Association of Bay Area Governments

Table 11

Employment: Although Sonoma has a fairly diversified job base, the retail and service industries predominate, comprising two-thirds of all jobs in town. Job growth in Sonoma, according to ABAG projections, will occur at an annual rate of 7-8% through the year 2005, with little change in the current mix of jobs.

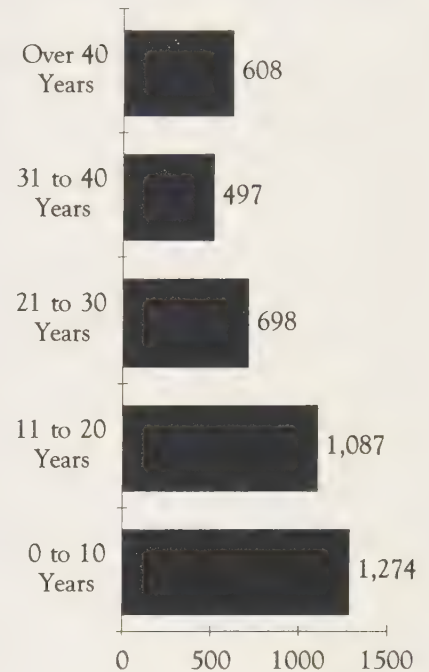
HOUSING STOCK CHARACTERISTICS

As of January 1, 1995, there were 4,433 housing units in the city of Sonoma. This number includes 2,800 single-family homes, 1,146 multi-family homes, and 487 mobile homes, but does not include congregate care facilities such as the London House. Since 1980, residential development in Sonoma has been controlled by the Growth Management Ordinance (GMO), which limits new housing to an average of 100 units per year. When the ordinance was first adopted, it included a one-time exemption for 200 senior housing units.

From 1985 through 1995, the city's housing stock increased by 1,064 units. This increase includes not only the construction of 946 new units, but also annexations, some of them involving large numbers of units. For example, the annexation of the Rancho de Sonoma mobile home park in 1986 added 99 units to the housing stock. In terms of new units, residential construction between January 1, 1985 and January 1, 1995 averaged 95 units per year. This amount includes the 164-unit Wine Country House, a senior housing facility which was approved under a one-time exemption to the Growth Management Ordinance. Excluding the Wine Country House, residential construction averaged 78 units per year, well within the 100-unit per year average targeted by the GMO.

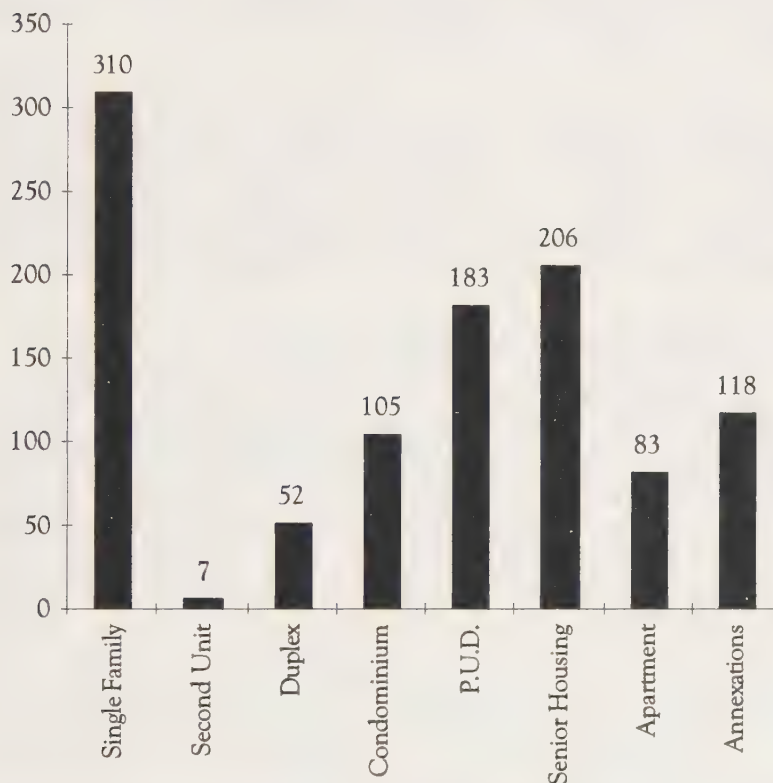
The growth in the city's housing stock since 1985 is depicted in Table 12, by category. The 206 units in the "senior" category include the 164 units in Wine Country House, and the 113 units shown in the "annexation" column include the 99 mobile homes in the Rancho de Sonoma park, fifteen single-family units, and four units in a small, existing mobile home park which had not been previously counted. (These four units were included in the annexation category for convenience, since they do not represent new development).

Age of Housing Stock (1990)



Source: Community Development Department Table 13

Housing Growth: 1985 to 1995



Source: Community Development Department

Table 12

Based on the 1990 census, although 56% of Sonoma's housing units have been built within the last 20 years, the town still has a significant number of older units, with 14% of all units having been built prior to 1950. The median year of construction, as reported in the census, was 1973. Sonoma is fortunate that many of its older homes have historic significance. These units are generally quite well-maintained and the housing stock as a whole is in good condition. 93% of all units are on the public water system, 96% are on the sewer system, 99% have complete kitchens, and 100% have complete plumbing facilities. According to the City Building Official, there are fewer than 20 units known to be seriously dilapidated or to present a health or safety problem,

although none of them exhibits conditions substantial enough to warrant demolition.

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

According to the 1990 census, there were 3,866 households in Sonoma, comprised of 2,207 family households (57% of the total), 1,465 one-person households (38%), and 215 other non-family households (5%). Not surprisingly, family households tended to be larger than non-family households, with 2.69 persons per household compared to 1.12. The average household size in Sonoma was 2.05. (Household size has been steadily declining in Sonoma, from 2.44 in 1970 and 2.15 in 1980).

Household tenure in Sonoma is weighted toward ownership. Of the 1990 housing stock, which numbered 4,164 units, 2,339 (56%) were owner-occupied, 1,479 (36%) were renter-occupied, and 346 (8%) were vacant. Since household sizes are generally small, rental units had only a slightly higher percentage of single occupancy than did ownership units (42% compared to 36%).

LEVEL OF PAYMENT V. ABILITY TO PAY

The affordability of a housing unit is determined by comparing household income to housing cost. According to federal guidelines, a household is "over-paying" if it is spending more than 30% of its gross annual income on housing costs. This guideline applies to both owners and renters. According to the 1990 census, 40% of Sonoma's households spent more than 30% of household income on housing costs. Within this group, 28% were homeowners and 53% were renters.

Overall, renters paid an average of \$739 per month, while homeowners with mortgages made an average monthly payment of \$1,174. Overpaying for housing is prevalent among households with an annual income of less than \$20,000. Of this group, 63% overpaid for housing. The problem is especially acute for renter households in this group, of whom at least 73% spent more than 35% of household income on housing costs.

A complete breakdown of household spending on housing costs, by household income level, is provided in Table 14 (facing page). The table shows, by income ranges, the percentages of home-owning and renting households in Sonoma by the percent of household income spent on housing costs. For example, as shown in the table, of home-owning households with income of less than \$10,000, 28% spend less than 20% of household income on mortgage payments.

Households by Percentage of Income Spent on Housing Costs

Household Income	Percent of Income Spent on Housing			
	<u><20%</u>	<u>20-29%</u>	<u>30-34%</u>	<u>>35%</u>
Homeowners				
<\$10,000 ¹	28%	21%	12%	28%
\$10,000-19,999	65%	17%	0%	18%
\$20,000-35,000	57%	12%	8%	24%
\$35,000-50,000	56%	19%	8%	18%
>\$50,000	47%	24%	16%	13%
Renters				
<\$10,000 ¹	0%	0%	0%	77%
\$10,000-19,999 ¹	5%	11%	12%	70%
\$20,000-35,000	6%	39%	15%	40%
\$35,000-50,000 ¹	26%	46%	20%	6%
>\$50,000	63%	32%	6%	0%

1) The entries do not total 100% because the census did not make this calculation for all households within this income range.

Source: Community Development Department

Table 14

ANALYSIS OF SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS

Special needs groups are those which have difficulty obtaining suitable housing due to particular characteristics or attributes which characterize the group. These groups, depending on their size and needs, may require special consideration in housing policies and implementation measures. The following analysis is based largely on information obtained from the 1990 census.

Elderly Households: The largest special needs group in Sonoma is the elderly (aged 65 and older), who account for 30% of Sonoma's population and who head 41% of all households. According to the 1990 census, 65% of renter households headed by seniors and 19% of owner households headed by seniors overpay for housing (i.e., spend more than 30% of their household income on housing costs).

In terms of housing needs, there are several factors which distinguish the elderly from other groups: Their household size tends to be smaller, their incomes tend to be lower, and they are more likely to suffer from disabilities. In responding to these issues, housing for the elderly should include smaller, affordable units, close to services and transit. In addition, specialized housing for the handi-

capped, as well as group homes that provide meals and health care, is also needed to serve this segment of the population.

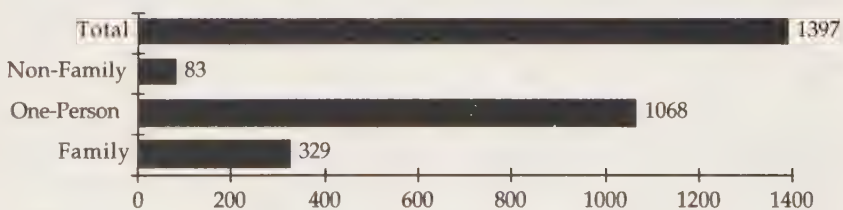
Mobile home parks tend to be popular with older residents because of relatively low unit costs and the provision of landscape maintenance. Vacancy rates in Sonoma's three mobile home parks, which were built in the early 1970's and house a total of 487 units, are extremely low.

A number of residential developments in Sonoma are specifically designated for seniors. These include Sonoma Creek, a 34-unit apartment development affordable to very-low income seniors, the Maysonnave Apartments, a 10-unit affordable development, the Setzer apartments, an eight-unit affordable development, and the Sonoma Hills Congregate Care center, an 80-unit facility (not yet constructed) of which 25% of the units will be affordable to low income seniors.

Handicapped: About 5.4% of Sonoma's population (462 persons) suffer from a mobility or self-care limitation. Of that group, 78% are elderly. In terms of housing needs, the disabled have much the same requirements as the elderly, including small, one-story units which are easy to maintain and transit-accessible or group housing opportunities in which meals and health care are provided.

Female Heads of Households: Women headed 1,480 households in 1990, 38% of Sonoma's total. This proportion represents an increase of 34% from 1980. The high proportion of female households is due largely to the advancing age of the population: 50% of these households consisted of single women aged 65 and older.

Households Headed by Women



Source: Community Development Department

Table 15

This group requires smaller, affordable units, particularly rentals for those who are not already home-owners.

Although no information is available as to the number of female-headed households overpaying for housing, the 1990 census did indicate that only 10% of the households within this group were below the poverty level.

Large families/Overcrowding: In general, household sizes in Sonoma are quite small, and households with five or more persons comprise less than 5% of all households. Overcrowded households (where occupancy exceeds one person per room, excluding bathrooms and kitchens) constituted only 2.4% of all households. This low rate of overcrowding does not seem to warrant policy consideration.

Farmworkers: The census identified 57 persons as being employed in the category of "Farming, Forestry, and Fishing," or 1.6% of employed persons over the age of 16. It is not known how many among this group would be considered farmworkers, nor is it known to what extent itinerant farmworkers are a presence in Sonoma, but their number is probably quite small. Farmworkers tend to live close to where they work, due to transportation limitations, and the large, intensively cultivated agricultural tracts within Sonoma Valley lie outside of the city. Nevertheless, Sonoma's economy greatly benefits from agriculture, both directly and indirectly. For this reason, the City will work with the County and local farmers to provide farmworker housing in Sonoma Valley.

Families and Persons Needing Emergency Shelter: Based on interviews with police and social service workers, there do not appear to be any homeless persons residing in Sonoma on a long-term basis (none were identified in the 1990 census). Requests for emergency shelter are primarily addressed by "Friends In Sonoma Helping" (FISH), a local non-profit entity. Its executive director estimates that such requests occur once or twice a month. In the past, the need was met by renting a room at a local hotel, since the frequency of requests did not warrant the development of a shelter. However, the motel which provided this service in the past is unwilling to continue because of occasional problems experienced with some of those using the service. Sonoma Valley now has no reliable means of responding to emergency shelter requests. Those seeking shelter are referred to Petaluma and Santa Rosa. To address this problem on a valley-wide basis, the Housing Element provides that the City will work with Sonoma County and FISH in establishing an emergency shelter in Sonoma Valley and will adopt changes in the Zoning Ordinance to provide potential sites for such uses.

EXISTING AND PROJECTED HOUSING NEEDS

State law requires each city and county, in its housing element, to plan for its fair share of housing needs at all income levels. A community's "fair share" of housing is calculated in a regional context by the local Council of Governments, which in the case of Sonoma is the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). Fair share allocations are grouped by household income categories defined relative to the county median income for a household of

four. In its 1989 Housing Needs Determinations, ABAG identified Sonoma's fair share allocation for 1988-1995 as 630 units, distributed among the various income categories as shown in the table below.

<i>ABAG Fair Share Allocations: 1988-1995</i>				
<u>Very Low</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Above Moderate</u>	<u>Total</u>
170	113	132	215	630

Source: Association of Bay Area Governments

Table 16

Over the course of the projection period, housing units within the various categories of affordability have been built or approved as follows (see Table 5 in the Housing Element for additional details):

- *Very Low Income:* 35 units have been built and another six have been approved but not yet constructed.
- *Low Income:* 108 units built, with another 67 approved but not yet constructed.
- *Moderate Income:* 127 units built, with another 29 approved but not yet constructed.
- *Above Moderate:* 315 units built, with another 346 approved but not yet constructed.

In essence, the allocations for moderate and above-moderate units have been met, the allocation for low income units may be met, assuming that approved units in this category are built, and (counting units both built and approved) the allocation for very low income units faces a shortfall of 129 units.

The estimated number of units constructed within each income category includes two types of units: 1) units built by the City or through incentive programs which are designated affordable units with contractual limits placed on rent or sales price; and, 2) units built by the private sector, without the benefit of government incentives, which have been determined to be affordable based on their actual rent or sales price. Identifying units within the first category is relatively straightforward, since there was active City participation.

Determining the affordability of units built through the private sector required a sales and rent survey (conducted by the Community Development Department in the Fall of 1994). The survey began with the development of a complete inventory of all

housing units constructed since 1988 (the beginning of the allocation period). Units were categorized by type, size, and number of bedrooms. For owner-occupied units, the value of the unit was determined through assessor's records and adjusted to reflect the year of its initial sale. The estimated sales price was then compared to the various affordability levels, based on the interest rate at the time of sale and assuming a 30-year fixed mortgage. Household sizes were estimated as follows: two persons for a one-bedroom unit, three persons for a two-bedroom unit, and one person per bedroom thereafter.

For rental properties, rents were determined for the initial year built by calling the landlord or property owner of each unit. For the most part, the information was available. In those cases where the information could not be obtained, rents were estimated based on comparisons with similar units for which the rent was known.

HOUSING DUE TO REVERT TO MARKET RATE

Overview

There are no state- or federally-assisted affordable developments within Sonoma due to revert to market rate status in the next ten years. A 34-unit federally-assisted senior apartment development (Village Green) reverted to market-rate in 1986 when the owner paid off the loan on the property early, but the City of Sonoma replaced these units with a 34-unit senior apartment development financed with redevelopment money.

At Risk Affordable Units

<u>Project Location</u>	<u>Affordable Units</u>	<u>Revert to Market Rate</u>
178 First Street West	2	1995
355 West Napa Street	4	1995
407 Seventh Street West	8	1996
226 West Spain Street	1	1998

Source: Community Development Department

Table 17

Another 15 affordable units built through the City's density bonus program are due to revert to market rate within the next ten years, as listed in Table 17 (see above). The affordability restrictions on another 23 density bonus units have already expired. Currently, the City has no program for preserving these units as affordable, although the development of such a program is called for in the Housing Element revision. The cost of constructing 15 replace-

ment apartment units is estimated at \$956,250. This estimate assumes an average unit size of 850 square feet and a construction cost of \$75 per square foot. Water and sewer connection fees would add \$148,290 while school fees would cost \$21,930, for a total cost of \$1,126,470 (or \$75.100 per unit). This estimate does not include land acquisition costs.

While it is difficult to estimate the costs associated with a subsidy program, it seems likely that such a program would be much less expensive than constructing replacement units. The City of Cotati, in its 1985-2005 General Plan, estimated that a preservation (or subsidy) program would be one-third the cost of a construction program. Based on this estimate, a subsidy program would cost about \$375,00 for 15 units over a 10-year period. Even on the high end, using cost assumptions associated with the Section 8 rent subsidy program, the ten-year cost for 15 units would be \$675,000.

Funding Sources

Potential funding sources for the preservation or replacement of at-risk housing include the following:

- *CDA funds:* Of the \$1.25 million expected for the CDA's Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund through the year 1999, \$807,000 is already committed to repaying the City's General Fund. This leaves more than \$400,000 available for preserving or replacing at-risk units.
- *CDBG funds:* On average, the City receives \$150,000 each year in CDBG funds. For 1995, the City has received \$200,000 that will be administered by the County to provide low- and no-interest loans to finance housing rehabilitation in the city.
- *HCD funds:* Because Sonoma's previous housing element was not certified, the City was unable to use state funds. Now that the 1995 housing element has been certified, the City will endeavor to take advantage of these funds.

Although there are apartments within the city subsidized by the Section 8 program, these are administered by the County. The City has not applied for Section 8 funding, preferring instead to seek funding from other sources, as noted above.

INVENTORY OF LAND SUITABLE FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The City has maintained a complete inventory of vacant and under-utilized parcels within city limits and the sphere of influ-

ence. Based on this inventory, it is estimated that the draft Land Use Plan for the 1995 General Plan revision designates a total of 298 acres of developable land for residential development (including pipeline development); this total is broken down by land use designation in Table 18 (below). The estimates shown in the table are based on the assumption that properties in all categories would build out to their maximum development potential according to their General Plan land use designation, except that properties with pending or approved development applications were assumed to build out at the amount requested or approved.

<i>Acres of Vacant and Underutilized Land Designated for Residential Development</i>		
	<u>City Limits</u>	<u>Sphere of Influence</u>
Rural Residential: (2 D.U./Acre Maximum)	0	17.93
Low Density Residential: (5 D.U./Acre Maximum)	58.77	9.89
Sonoma Residential: (8 D.U./Acre Maximum)	62.24	82.93
Medium Density Residential: (10 D.U./Acre Maximum)	28.96	6.66
High Density Residential: (12 D.U./Acre Maximum)	2.78	0
Housing Opportunity: (20 D.U./Acre Maximum)	1.92	0
Mixed Use: (15 D.U./Acre Maximum)	18.60	7.57
Total Acres:	172.82	124.98

Source: Community Development Department

Table 18

The overall development potential of these sites is estimated at 1,136 single-family units and 941 multi-family units. The amount of development which could be accommodated by this land is more than adequate to provide for future residential development as projected by ABAG. These properties are proposed for residential designations because they are generally suitable for that use, although the development of individual sites would be subject to evaluation through the planning and environmental review process on a case-by-case basis, to identify any unique features or constraints. Those properties receiving revised designations in this General Plan revision would be appropriately re-zoned following the adoption of the General Plan.

All of the properties identified in the inventory are subject to the same general short-term and long-term constraints. In the short-term, Sonoma is currently experiencing a shortage of sewer capacity and impending shortages of classroom space in nearly all levels

of the school system. While the water supply is adequate for current needs, Sonoma is approaching its maximum contracted allocation. In the long term, these properties will be subject to the Growth Management Ordinance, which limits residential development to an average of 100 units per year.

GOVERNMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

Governmental actions affect the cost and provision of housing in numerous ways, both directly and indirectly. The following review examines the primary local governmental constraints on housing development, with the intent of identifying methods of removing or mitigating barriers to the extent feasible.

Fees

Planning-related Fees: Planning fees are charged by the City upon the submittal of any application for a discretionary development approval, such as a use permit, minor subdivision, or planned unit development permit. Table 19 lists the City's planning fee schedule (as of July, 1995) for various residential development applications. These fees vary, from \$150 for Initial Studies, to \$600 for PUDs. As a percentage of any residential development, these fees represent a very low total; most of them do not increase as the size of a project varies, and those that do increase are not significant in comparison to the total value of a project.

Planning Fee Schedule, 1995

<u>Procedure</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Tentative Map	\$300 + \$50 per lot
Parcel Map	\$200 + \$50 per lot
Use Permit	\$200
Environmental Review (Initial Study)	\$150
Rezoning	\$400
Prezoning	\$400
General Plan Amendment	\$600
Planned Unit Development	\$600
Design Review (<5 units)	\$34
Design Review (5-20 units)	\$66
Design Review (>20 units)	\$154

Source: Community Development Department

Table 19

Table 20 illustrates the planning fees charged for selected residential projects in Sonoma. In each of the three examples used, the cost per residential unit is a very small percentage of the total value of the project.

Planning Fees for Typical Projects

<u>Three-lot subdivision</u>	<u>Fee</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Cost Per Unit</u>
Parcel Map	\$350		
Initial Study	\$150	\$500	\$167
<u>Two-unit apartment in Commercial zone</u>			
Use Permit	\$200		
Design Review	\$34	\$234	\$117
<u>24-unit PUD</u>			
Rezoning	\$400		
Tentative Map	\$1,500		
PUD	\$600		
Design Review	\$154		
Initial Study:	\$150		
EIR	\$45,500	\$48,304	\$2,012

Source: Community Development Department

Table 20

Construction-related Fees: Fees for residential construction fall into five major groups: building permit fees, city impact fees, water connection fees, school impact fees, and sewer connection fees. The first three are set and collected by the City of Sonoma, while school fees are set and collected by the Sonoma Valley Unified School District and sewer fees are charged by the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District. Although the amounts involved may be reasonable individually, collectively these fees represent a significant cost component in the price of a new home. Table 21 (following page) illustrates the typical fees associated with a single-family residence and detached and attached units in a Planned Unit Development.

Despite the large total cost, new home prices in Sonoma are so high, especially for single-family homes, that the fees still represent only a small portion of the sales price. For example, the 3,000 square foot residence described in the chart could, depending on its location, sell for as much as \$400,000, in which case the permit fees would represent only 4% of the price.

The City has used restraint in regulating its own fees. While building permit fees have grown incrementally over the years, the increases have been in line with with other comparably sized communities. The town's largest fees, the Capital Improvement Fee and the Impact fee, have not been increased in several years. (Proceeds from the Capital Improvement Fee and the Impact Fee go into the Capital Improvement Fund and are used for infrastruc-

ture improvements such as road maintenance and storm drain upgrades.) In an effort to reduce the potential impact of City fees on affordable housing development, the City has a policy of exempting such units from the building permit and plan check fees, the Capital Improvement Fee, and the Impact Fee. These fees are reimbursed by redevelopment funds to ensure that the savings for affordable units are not charged to market rate units. Water fees are calculated to ensure that the water system is self-sufficient.

Fees for Residential Development

	Single Family Dwelling (2,000 sq. ft.)	Detached Unit in P.U.D. (1,500 sq. ft.)	Attached Unit in P.U.D. (1,250 sq. ft.)
Construction Valuation:	\$167,000	\$128,000	\$101,000
Building Permit:	\$874	\$738	\$643
Plan Check:	\$568	\$479	\$418
Miscellaneous:	\$394	\$306	\$68
<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>\$1,836</u>	<u>\$1,523</u>	<u>\$1,129</u>
Capital Improvement:	\$614	\$614	\$478
Impact Fee:	\$966	\$966	\$966
<u>Subtotal:</u>	<u>\$1,580</u>	<u>\$1,580</u>	<u>\$1,444</u>
Water Connection:	\$3,860	\$3,860	\$3,860
School Impact:	\$3,440	\$2,580	\$2,150
Sewer Connection:	\$6,026	\$6,026	\$6,026
<u>Subtotal:</u>	<u>\$13,326</u>	<u>\$12,466</u>	<u>\$12,036</u>
Total Fees:	\$16,742	\$15,569	\$14,609

Source: Community Development Department

Table 21

Two of the highest fees are charged by other jurisdictions, the school district and the sanitation district. School impact fees are regulated by the state. The local school district charges at the upper level of what the state allows because the school system is approaching capacity and the funds are needed to provide additional classroom space. The sanitation district sets its fees with the goal of ensuring that the district is self-sufficient. Its fees have increased considerably in recent years to cover the cost of capital expenditures.

Building Codes

New construction and renovation in Sonoma must meet the requirements of the Uniform Building Code (UBC). The City of Sonoma has not made any amendments to the UBC. All dwellings are inspected whenever a building permit is sought. However, the

City otherwise lacks the resources to monitor violations of the building codes to any great degree. Instead, the City relies on public complaints of alleged violations. Once a violation has been confirmed by City staff, the City's primary recourse for forcing compliance is the abatement process.

Public Improvements

Typical public improvements required by the City for residential development include 1) reconstruction of curb, gutter, sidewalk and street; 2) installation of separate sewer mains and laterals; 3) installation of separate water service; 4) provision of private underground utility services (gas, electricity, cable T.V., telephone) to each lot; 5) installation of street trees and street lighting; 6) development of storm drains and related facilities; and 7) provision of asphalt or concrete paving at all parking and driveway areas. These improvements are standard for most cities; it has long since been established that local governments cannot afford to pay for the improvements necessitated by new development and can, therefore, charge improvement fees, as long as the fees charged are reasonably related to the cost of providing the improvements.

Processing Time

The time it takes to bring a residential development from an initial application to a final planning approval (e.g. tentative map or use permit approval) can have a significant effect on housing prices because of the costs of carrying the land. In Sonoma, processing times for smaller residential developments (those of four units or less) have not increased substantially over the last five years. It normally takes an application of this kind only two to three months to be decided. Somewhat larger projects, of five to twenty units, for which negative declarations are approved, are also typically processed within three months of application.

The processing time for larger-scale developments, however, has increased substantially, especially for those in which an environmental impact report (EIR) is required. There are several factors responsible for this increase in processing time. The requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which governs the preparation of EIRs, have grown increasingly complex and the standards for legal adequacy have become more rigid. As a result, the City and its environmental consultants must spend considerable time in document preparation to ensure that the EIR is legally adequate. In addition, public involvement in the EIR process has increased, which also leads to additional time in document preparation since all public comments must be addressed. Delay may also result when developers do not submit information needed for the review process in a timely manner. Some applicants have delayed their own projects for months in this way.

A project for which an EIR is required normally takes a minimum of one and a half years to process, but it can take up to four years if there are special environmental circumstances involved, such as the presence of vernal pools. The City has taken the position that it is critical to take the time needed to prepare a complete and legally defensible EIR, since in many cases, if not the majority, the EIR is subjected to litigation. The City takes seriously its responsibility to process applications in a timely way, but it will require action by the State with regard to the reform of environmental laws to significantly shorten the environmental review process.

The most recent project for which an EIR was required was the 24-unit, market-rate Lely PUD. Certified in June of 1995, this EIR took about one year to prepare, from consultant selection to certification by the Planning Commission. Although this EIR was prepared because of some site-specific issues (location near a single-family-house neighborhood and along a creek/drainage channel), it is important to note that the City did not require the EIR. Following the preparation of an Initial Study, the City Planning Commission requested an expanded Initial Study, but the developer instead chose to prepare an EIR in order to avoid potential delays and expense resulting from debate over the adequacy of environmental review.

In recent years, an EIR has been required for most large (20 units or more) residential projects. These include the 106-unit Madera Park project, the 36-unit Fryer Creek Village, and the 48-unit MacArthur Estates. Each of the projects was delayed by the EIR process, from five months for Fryer Creek Village, to 36 months for MacArthur Estates, to 45 months for Madera Park. However, although the EIR process for these residential projects was lengthy, thereby contributing in part to higher housing costs at those projects, the only one of these four projects with any affordable units—Fryer Creek—had the shortest EIR process. The other three projects are entirely market rate, so in their case the lengthy environmental review process has had no apparent effect on the provision of affordable housing. Moreover, the City has approved several affordable projects recently that have not required EIRs, including the 16-unit Marcy Court and the 18-unit Palm Court, both of which offer moderate income units to first-time home-buyers, and the 34-unit Sonoma Commons, which will offer low and very-low income units to first-time home-buyers.

One method that the City has instituted, with partial success, to expedite environmental review is the “Expanded Initial Study,” which provides a detailed assessment of potential impacts for a development project prior to the decision on whether to prepare an EIR. The expanded initial study may show that a negative declaration is appropriate or it may find that there are significant impacts associated with the project which cannot readily be miti-

gated, resulting in the requirement of an EIR. While the preparation of an expanded initial study is something of a gamble from the applicant's point of view, if an EIR is eventually needed, the analysis which goes into the study may shorten the EIR preparation period. In some cases this approach has worked to mitigate potential impacts while avoiding the need for an EIR. In other cases, such as the Fryer Creek Village application, the applicant paid for an extensive expanded initial study only to find that an EIR was required after all.

The effect of the City's Growth Management Ordinance on processing times is discussed below, in the analysis of policy constraints.

Infrastructure and Services

Water: Sonoma and Sonoma Valley receive their water from the Russian River via aqueduct. The City, like all others in the county, contracts with the Sonoma County Water Agency for its supplies. The current contract entitles the City to 3.3 million gallons per day (mgd). In July of 1990, the peak use period, the amount used was 2.7 mgd, about 82% of the maximum entitlement. It is estimated that the remaining capacity of the entitlement is sufficient to serve continued growth at 100 units per year through the year 2000 (this estimate also includes continued commercial growth through the same period). The City is negotiating with the Water Agency to increase its entitlement to 6.3 mgd, an amount sufficient to serve buildout of the City's sphere of influence. Once agreement has been reached, a new pipeline must be developed.

Sewer: The Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District is responsible for the collection and treatment of sewage in Sonoma and Sonoma Valley. The District is administered by the County Department of Public Works and its Board consists of two County Supervisors and one Sonoma City Council representative. The treatment plant, which is located on Eighth Street East, has a wet weather treatment capacity of 9.0 million gallons per day (mgd) and a dry weather capacity of 3.0 mgd, as permitted by the State Water Quality Control Board. In 1989, the average dry weather flow was 2.82 mgd, about 94% of plant capacity. Current flows utilize up to 97% of permitted plant capacity.

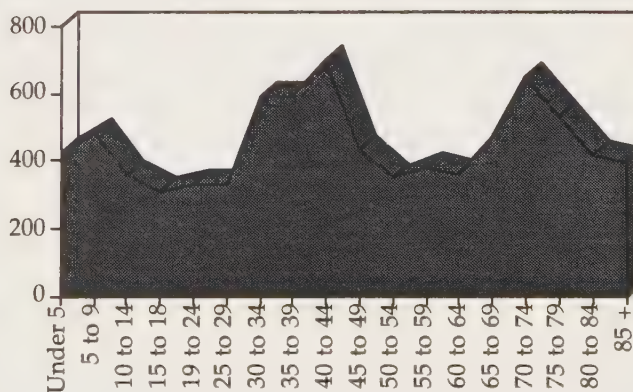
After studying numerous options for increasing treatment capacity, the District Board decided to pursue a conservation program intended to provide additional capacity without the necessity of a significant plant expansion. Under the program, which was instituted in January of 1994, developers of new housing or other types of development are required to retrofit (or pay the district to retrofit) the bathrooms of existing units within the district with low flow toilets, at a ratio of five ESDs conserved for each ESD

required to serve the new development. Additional capacity increases have been achieved through improvements in treatment processing. Further increases may be possible with improvements to the collection system, which currently suffers from a high rate of infiltration and inflow.

With regard to the improvement of the treatment plant itself, in a 1993 preliminary design study commissioned by the District, the determination was made that plant capacity could be increased to 6.0 mgd, with all improvements confined to the existing site (*Wastewater Treatment Plant Capacity Expansion, Preliminary Design Report*, John Carollo Engineers, October, 1993). Such an increase would be more than adequate to meet district-wide projected needs through the year 2005. Any increase in plant capacity would be subject to the review of the Water Quality Control Board. In addition, the District's reclamation facilities would have to be expanded commensurately in order to accommodate increased flows.

Schools: Sonoma and Sonoma Valley are served by the Sonoma Valley Unified School District. The public schools available to city residents are the Prestwood and Sassarini Elementary Schools, the Altimira Middle School, and the Sonoma Valley High School. A Charter School, affiliated with the School District, began operation in the Fall of 1994. The student population has grown by an annual average of 125 students over the last five years and, according to enrollment projections, this growth will continue through the year 2000. The growth of the student population is only partially attributable to new development, as many new students are added by the turnover of existing residences from older, retired households to young families with children.

Age Distribution



Source: 1990 Census

Table 22

Until recently, all elements of the school system had been nearing capacity. However, the development of the Charter School has

resulted in increased capacity in the elementary and middle school grade levels. The School District recognizes that more needs to be done in order to address projected enrollment increases, particularly at the high school level. In June of 1994, voters approved a 27 million dollar bond issue for the renovation and development of school facilities. The District has appointed a blue-ribbon committee to develop recommendations as to the best use of these funds. In addition, the district recently expressed the intent of acquiring the Dolcini property, a group of undeveloped parcels (approximately 24 acres, total) located immediately south of the High School.

In order to offset the impact of new development on the school system, state law permits the District to charge fees against new commercial and residential development. For residential construction, over the course of the 1990-91 school year, when the fee was \$1.58 per square foot for residential construction and 26 cents per square foot for commercial development, school impact fees totalled \$250,000. As of January, 1995, the fee for residential construction stood at \$1.72 per square foot.

Police and Fire: These municipally operated services are adequately staffed at present and it is not anticipated that they will represent a constraint on housing development in the future.

Policies

Growth Management Ordinance: Sonoma's residential growth control system—the Growth Management Ordinance or GMO—was adopted in 1980 and was based on a computer model that examined various rates of growth against the City's ability to maintain an appropriate level of services. As a result of this analysis, the City established a growth ordinance allowing an average of 100 planning approvals per year over the 20-year period of 1980 to 2000. The ordinance also includes a one-time exemption for 200 senior housing units. Key provisions of the system are as follows:

- Control occurs at the planning approval stage, or "front-end," of the development process through an annual distribution of allotments.
- Projects of fewer than five (5) units, which are defined as "small developments," may be processed at any time, but the number of units in such projects are counted against the succeeding year's available allotment.
- Developments of five (5) units or more (defined as "large developments") are processed on a first-come/first-served basis depending on their place on a "Pre-Application Waiting List." There is no fee to get on the list; all that is required is a

preliminary development plan and the authorization of the property owner. A one-page form is used to record pre-applications.

- The ordinance establishes a “development year” over the course of which units are counted and allotments are distributed as described below. The development year runs from September 1st to August 31st.
- Each September, the City Council distributes allotments from a 100-unit pool, as follows: first, the number of small developments approved during the previous twelve months is subtracted; next, developments which have received some but not all of their allotments receive additional allotments (up to 30 per year); lastly, projects on the waiting list receive allotments (up to 30 per project). Allotments are distributed until either the pool is used up or there are no more projects in line to receive them.
- Large developments may receive a maximum of 30 allotments per development year (in order to prevent one project from taking an entire year’s allocation). However, a project only needs one allotment to become eligible for a planning application to be filed.
- Once a potential development on the waiting list receives allotments, the prospective developer has one year to file an application; otherwise, the allotments are forfeited. Forfeited allotments are generally added to the following year’s allocation pool.
- In cases where a development is denied or withdrawn, any allotments accumulated by such developments are generally added to the following year’s allocation pool.
- In years when not all of the the 100-unit allotment pool is used, the remainder (up to 50 units) is carried over to the allotment pool for the following year.
- Based on the current length of the waiting list, a large project entering the list today might have to wait five to seven years before receiving any allotments.
- Although over the long term the 100-unit per year average is maintained, the system may result in some peaks in actual construction because of varying market conditions or a group of approved projects all building at the same time.
- Until November of 1993, when this exemption was removed, projects in which 100% of the units were affordable were

exempt from the processing restrictions; however, the units are eventually counted in the year they would have been eligible to begin processing had the project been market-rate.

The processing exemption for affordable units was a powerful incentive, generating applications for affordable developments which otherwise might not have been made. Nonetheless, the exemption was removed in 1993, primarily because of public concern that low income housing would be concentrated in a few areas, rather than integrated throughout the city and interspersed within individual developments. Ultimately, the City Council determined that the exemption was no longer encouraging the development of affordable housing, but instead was generating more opposition to such developments. Although the incentive for 100% affordable developments has been removed, policy 1 and implementation measure 2 of the Housing Element direct, through the revision of the Growth Management Ordinance, that incentives be provided for mixed market-rate/affordable developments and that affordable projects sponsored and funded by the City be exempted from processing restrictions.

The Growth Management Ordinance is not expected to prevent Sonoma from meeting its regional fair share housing requirements. With its 1988-1995 fair share period extended to 1997, the City still has three years to meet its allocation of 129 very low-income units (see Table 5, page 47), and the 300 units permitted by the ordinance over that period, combined with the new incentives and processing exemptions, should enable the City to meet its target.

Mobile Home Rent Control: The City Council adopted a mobile home rent control ordinance which took effect on January 2, 1993. This ordinance limits rent increases to a maximum of one percent per year and establishes a procedure by which applications for increases are reviewed and decided upon by an appointed board. In terms of evaluating applications, the ordinance establishes the rebuttable presumption that a rent increase equal to 60% of the increase in the consumer price index represents a reasonable return. This ordinance will ensure stable rents for those residents within the mobile home parks who are not on long-term leases (in excess of 12 months), but it is not known whether the existence of the ordinance will discourage the future development of mobile home parks in Sonoma.

Land Use and Zoning Regulations: Currently (as of January, 1995), the primary residential zoning districts in Sonoma are the R-1 zone (allowing densities of up to 6 units per acre), the R-2 zone (8 units per acre normally and up to 13 in special circumstances), the R-3 zone (up to 12 units per acre), and the R-4 zone (up to 15 units per acre). The Planning Commission and City Council

recently amended the R-2 zone to provide for “Infill Planned Unit Developments,” which are in essence PUDs on lots as small as 5,000 square feet. This change allows the creation of smaller, ownership residences.

The City’s land use and zoning regulations—including the standards for setbacks, lot coverage, open space, building height, and parking requirements—are predicated on the community’s general desire for lower densities and plentiful open space, but the standards are not so restrictive as to preclude opportunities for higher density housing. Table 23, below, summarizes the basic standards associated with the City’s residential zoning districts (as of July 1995).

<i>Zoning/Development Standards</i>					
<u>Zone</u>	<u>Setbacks</u>	<u>Coverage</u>	<u>Open Space</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Parking</u> ¹
R-1	20/20/15	40%	N/A	30/2	1
R-2	20/20/15	50%	N/A	30/2	1/1.5
R-3	15/10/15	50%	35%	35/2	1.5
R-4	10/10/5	N/A	30%	35/2	1.5

1) Spaces per unit.

Source: Community Development Department

Table 23

There is no evidence that these land use controls constrain the provision of housing, which is especially important with regard to very-low income housing, the one income category in which the City has not yet met its fair share requirement. In the R-4 zone, for example, the most likely zone for very-low income housing, there is no limit on lot coverage and the setback requirements are minimal. In addition, parking requirements are often waived for certain affordable projects, especially those which provide housing for seniors. For the Wine Country House and Sonoma Hills, two congregate care facilities with nearly 250 units between them, the City required only 0.5 parking spaces per unit.

A sample of recent affordable projects, including Wine Country House and Sonoma Hills, demonstrates how the City’s open space and coverage standards have permitted the development of affordable housing (Table 24, facing page). In all six examples, the amount of open space greatly exceeds the required minimum, from 45% for the 34-unit Sonoma Commons to 53% for the 18-unit Palm Court. Similarly, the amount of building coverage for these projects is well below the City’s maximum, from 24% for Sonoma Commons to 35% for the 164-unit Wine Country House.

The City does not normally conduct architectural review for single-family units. There is, however, architectural review for all

multi-unit projects of more than two units and all PUDs (including landscape review). The City also requires that all front yards and the street side of all corner lots be appropriately landscaped and maintained.

Comparison of Selected Affordable Projects

<u>Project</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Coverage</u>	<u>Open Space</u>
Marcy Court	16	28%	49%
Palm Court	18	33%	53%
Sonoma Commons	34	24%	45%
Sonoma Hills	80	33%	50%
Villa Cortina	26	33%	n/a
Wine Country House	164	35%	50%

Source: Community Development Department

Table 24

The current Zoning Ordinance also allows mixed-use developments in two commercial zoning districts, but it does not have a specific mixed-use zoning designation. In addition, certain types of office developments are allowed in the R-3 and R-4 zones. This provision has led to some mixed-use developments, but has also resulted in office-only developments. In order to prevent areas designated for multi-family residential use from erosion by office development, while encouraging mixed-use development in suitable locations, policies and implementation measures in Community Development Element and the Housing Element of the 1995 General Plan will result in the following changes to the Zoning Ordinance and other development regulations:

- New development will be required to meet a minimum density associated with the zoning designation of the site.
- An inclusionary requirement will be implemented for developments of five units or more. An increased inclusionary requirement would apply to developments in the new "Sonoma Residential" designation.
- New residential districts have been created to specifically identify sites suited to higher density development, allowing base densities of up to 20 units per acre.
- Offices will no longer be allowed in multi-family zones.
- A mixed-use zone, corresponding to the "Mixed Use" land use designation, will be established to encourage such development in appropriate locations.

- Mixed-use development will be encouraged in selected commercial areas, especially in the downtown and other retail and service centers.
- The maximum lot coverage allowed in the city will be increased to 65% in the Housing Opportunity Site designation and to 60% in the High Density Residential designation.

These measures have been coordinated with Community Development Element policies and the Land Use Plan for the 1995 General Plan revision.

Second Unit Ordinance: Sonoma's second unit ordinance, adopted in 1985, requires that second units be subject to use permit review and establishes various criteria regarding size, appearance and provision of off-street parking. Along with these typical standards, the ordinance also provides that second units may only be allowed in conjunction with a main residence which is at least 10 years old and that second units shall be subject to an affordability agreement with the City so that, if rented, they are rented at an affordable level. In addition, second units are counted under the Growth Management Ordinance, although they are not subject to the waiting list requirement. It is recognized that the age restriction, the affordability restriction, and the counting of the units under the GMO are contrary to state law. The extent to which these requirements have acted as a constraint is unknown, but fewer than 10 second units have been constructed since the ordinance was adopted. The 1995 Housing Element includes an implementation program to bring the second unit ordinance into legal compliance.

Housing Programs: Sonoma has been a leader in the provision of affordable housing since 1980, when the City Council adopted a density bonus policy which, even today, exceeds state requirements. Sonoma's policy allows, by use permit, density bonuses of up to 50% for affordable projects in its R-1, R-2, and R-3 zones (in the R-4 zone, the maximum bonus is 25%). Under the 1995 General Plan, density bonuses in all residential zones will be limited to 25%, as a trade-off to the creation of higher density residential designations. Another effective incentive has been the exemption of affordable units from the processing restrictions of the Growth Management Ordinance. Affordable housing developments also benefit from priority permit processing and the waiver of building permit fees, which are reimbursed by the Community Development Agency (CDA), the City's redevelopment agency.

In addition to providing developer incentives, the City has actively developed and acquired affordable housing projects, utilizing redevelopment funds. In 1986, the City completed construction of Sonoma Creek Senior Housing, a 34-unit senior affordable apart-

ment complex, developed with CDA funds. More recently, the CDA purchased a partially-constructed 13-unit development which had ceased construction due to the financial difficulties of its previous owner. The City completed the project and sold the units at an affordable rate to first time home-buyers, most whom already lived or worked within the city. The City has also developed partnerships with private developers for the provision of affordable housing, in which the City has extended its "soft-second" loan program to privately developed affordable housing projects. Two developments have already been constructed through this partnership arrangement, the 16-unit Marcy Court and the 18-unit Palm Court.



Sonoma Creek Senior Housing, pictured on the left, is a 34-unit apartment development located on Oregon Street, built by the City through its Community Development Agency. The long waiting list for residents demonstrates the need for additional low-cost senior housing.

A pending affordable development, the 34-unit Sonoma Commons, began construction in 1995. This project received Community Development Block Grant funds obtained by the City and will provide ownership opportunities for very low and low income households. Sonoma Commons is notable for having been developed through a unique design competition administered by the City. The competition, which was developed to promote neighborhood involvement in the design of the project and to showcase innovative architecture, attracted nationally renowned architects and resulted in an award-winning scheme produced by William Turnbull and Associates. Community Development Block Grant funds were also used by the City, in addition to redevelopment funds, to purchase the Maysonnave property, for which 10 affordable senior apartments have been approved.

The following list of projects which have benefited from City housing policies and programs provides a clear demonstration of Sonoma's commitment to the provision of affordable housing:

"Cabernet Apartments," 550 Seventh Street West

Size:	7-unit family rental
Type:	Low and moderate income
No. of Affordable Units:	7 units
Term of Affordability:	Project lifetime



Mary Court, a 16-unit affordable development located on Broadway, will provide opportunities for first-time homebuyers into the future because resale restrictions will ensure its continued affordability.

Program(s): CDA funds/Burbank Housing funds
Status: Built and occupied

"Sonoma Creek," 841 Oregon Street

Size: 34-unit senior rental
Type: Very low income
No. of Affordable Units: 34 units
Term of Affordability: Project lifetime
Program(s): CDA (Owned by City of Sonoma)
Status: Built and occupied

"Casa Primera," 805 First Street West

Size: 13-unit condominium
Type: Moderate income, first-time home-buyers
No. of Affordable Units: 13 units
Term of Affordability: 40 years; resale restrictions
Program(s): CDA purchase; HUD/FHA financing
Status: Built and occupied

"Marcy Court," 1225 Broadway

Size: 16-unit Planned Unit Development (PUD)
Type: Moderate income, first-time home-buyers
No. of Affordable Units: 16 units
Term of Affordability: 40 years; resale restrictions
Program(s): Density Bonus; GMO exemption; CDA downpayment assistance
Status: Built and occupied

"Palm Court," 905 West Spain Street

Size: 18-unit Planned Unit Development (PUD)
Type: Moderate income, first-time home-buyers
No. of Affordable Units: 18 units
Term of Affordability: 40 years; resale restrictions
Program(s): Density Bonus; GMO exemption; CDA downpayment assistance
Status: Built and occupied

"Maysonnave Apartments," 270 First Street East

Size: 10-unit senior rental
Type: Very low income
No. of Affordable Units: 10 units
Term of Affordability: 30 years
Program(s): CDBG; GMO exemption
Status: Under construction



This drawing depicts "Sonoma Commons," a 34-unit affordable development approved for a site at 820 West Spain Street. The project design was the result of an architectural competition which attracted nationally known designers. The design parameters were established by a special panel which included neighborhood representatives. The winning design is by William Turnbull and Associates, a Bay Area architectural firm with an international reputation.

When built, this development will provide low-income families in Sonoma and Sonoma Valley with an opportunity to become homeowners.

"Sonoma Commons," 820 West Spain Street

Size: 34-unit condominium
Type: Low and very low income, first-time home-buyers
No. of Affordable Units: 34 units
Term of Affordability: 40 years; resale restrictions
Program(s): Density Bonus program; GMO exemption; CDBG funds
Status: Under construction

"Fryer Creek Village," 219 Newcomb Street

Size: 36-unit Planned Unit Development (PUD)
Type: Moderate income, first-time home-buyers
No. of Affordable Units: 14units (proposed)
Term of Affordability: 40 years; resale restrictions
Program(s): Density Bonus; GMO exemption
Status: Under construction

"Setzer Apartments," 673 First Street West

Size: 8-unit senior rental
Type: Low income
No. of Affordable Units: 8 units
Term of Affordability: 30 years
Program(s): Density Bonus; GMO exemption

Status: Built and occupied

“Mariposa Court,” 856 Second Street West

Size: 19-unit P.U.D

Type: Moderate income, first-time home-buyers

No. of Affordable Units: 19 units

Term of Affordability: 30 years

Program(s): Density Bonus; GMO exemption

Status: Approved but not yet built

That affordable developments built to date have served local needs is demonstrated by the fact that about 80% of the buyers of these units (and 100% of senior renters) were already living or working in the Sonoma Valley. The local economy has a large service sector, with many jobs in which the wages are not commensurate with the inflated housing market.

As a means of efficiently managing its affordable housing commitments, the City Council in 1991 established the Sonoma Community Housing Corporation, a non-profit entity with an appointed board. The corporation is responsible for managing the City’s senior apartment complex, administering the soft-second loan program, and screening potential residents to ensure that affordable units are only rented or sold to households which meet the City’s adopted income criteria. This board also implements the City’s policies of non-discrimination in housing developments it participates in and disseminates information on fair housing laws to the community-at-large.

In addition to offering housing development incentives and programs, the City is active in the preservation of the existing affordable housing stock, of which the town’s 487 mobile home units are a key element. These units represent an important stock of senior affordable housing: They cost far less than traditional housing types and the space rental is typically in the range of \$200 to \$400 per month. In order to maintain these units at an affordable level and in good condition, the City Council has adopted a mobile home rent control ordinance (described previously) and has applied for Community Development Block Grant funds for the rehabilitation of older units.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

Land Value and Construction Costs: Perhaps the most significant non-governmental constraint on the cost and provision of housing in Sonoma is its location in the Bay Area, one of the most expensive housing markets in the nation. In a survey of home sales within Sonoma from 1991 through 1993, the median price for a single-family 3-bedroom unit of less than six years of age was

\$365,000. For a two-bedroom P.U.D. unit or condominium unit, the median sales prices was \$196,000 and \$128,000, respectively (for units six years old or less.) These prices reflect high land values. According to local real-estate brokers and developers, a vacant, improved single-family parcel in Sonoma (of which there are relatively few) could sell for up to \$185,000 depending on its location. The cost of land for multi-family development is similarly high. For example, a 26,000 square foot lot with an R-2 zoning recently sold for approximately \$350,000. Given that the maximum short-term development potential of the lot is only four units under the City's interim ordinance, the land cost per dwelling amounts to \$87,500, excluding any needed public improvements. These high land costs tend to result in the development of large, expensive units so that the developer can get a return on the land investment through the sale of the home. Existing, older residences are also affected. The 1991-93 home sale survey showed that the sales price for a 3-bedroom single family residence, 21 years old or older, ranged from \$185,000 to \$358,000, with a median price of \$255,000.

Sales of Vacant and Under-Utilized Parcels¹

<u>R-1 Zoning</u>	<u>Lot Size</u>	<u>Exist. Units</u>	<u>Potential Units</u>	<u>Sales/ Asking Price</u>	<u>Status</u>
19705 Fifth St. East	6,120	0	1	\$100,000	Sold
305 East MacArthur	43560	1	3	\$300,000	Sold
485 West MacArthur	18,000	1	1	\$230,000	For Sale
485 West MacArthur	7,950	0	1	\$110,000	For Sale
310 Denmark	11,280	0	1	\$185,000	For Sale
320 Denmark	12,680	0	1	\$189,000	For Sale
 <u>R-2 Zoning</u>					
273 First St. West	26,100	0	4	\$350,000	Sold
699 Curtin Lane	8,000	0	2	\$225,000	For Sale
275 West MacArthur	23,958	1	3	\$215,000	Sold
571 Oregon Street ²	8,382	0	4	\$150,000	Sold
19980 Fifth St. West ³	34,500	0	5	\$135,000	For Sale

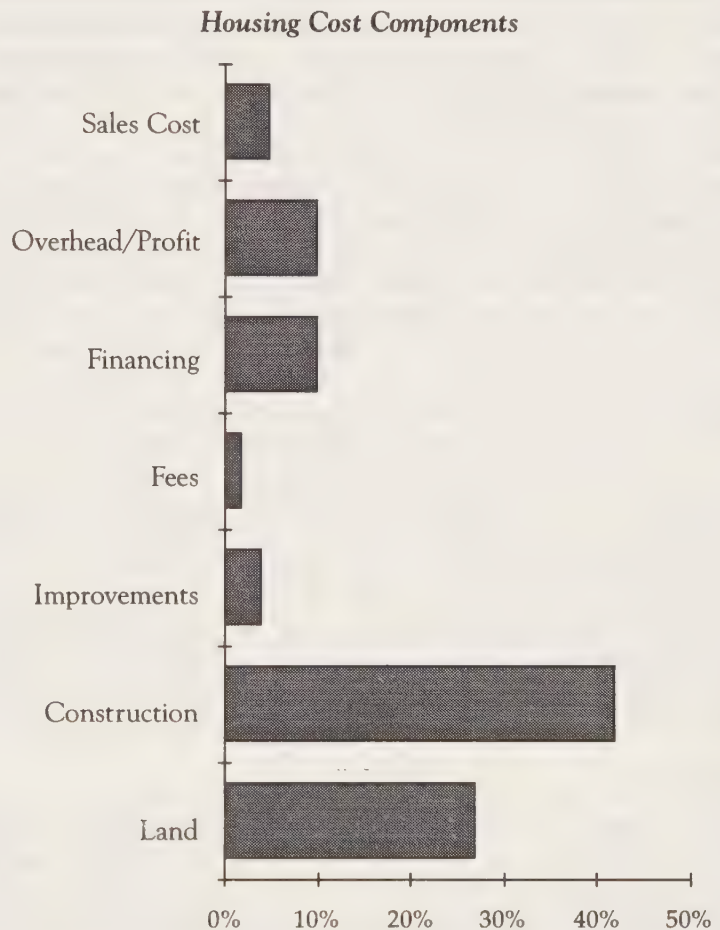
- 1) Sales since January 1, 1992; for-sale properties from active listings.
2) Approved for a 4-unit apartment with two affordable units (through a density bonus).
3) Currently outside of Sanitation District.

Source: Multiple Listing Service

Table 25

Construction Costs: In a recent survey of Bay Area regional costs, the Bay Area Council found that the cost of construction was by far the largest component in the the final sales price of a home. This survey was reviewed by local developers, who found that the proportions shown for the region are generally applicable to this area. Construction costs include both labor and materials. Although the cost of labor has remained stable over the last few

years due to the recession, materials costs, especially wood, have climbed dramatically. In the last eight months, the price of wood for home construction has increased 38%. While it is possible to use alternative materials, many lower cost substitutes are either not readily available or not accepted by consumers.



Source: Bay Area Council

Table 26

Interest Rates and Ability to Pay: Interest rates have a profound effect on households' ability to purchase housing, especially those of moderate income or less. While rates are currently at relatively low levels, it is difficult to predict how long this situation will last. Table 27 illustrates the effect of interest rates on home purchasing power for very low, low and moderate income households.

Availability of Financing: According to local banking and real-estate professionals, the housing market in Sonoma has stabilized from the downturn experienced over the last several years and in some areas has become quite active. Construction lending requirements are tougher, due to federal regulations imposed two to three years ago, but construction loans are available in Sonoma. The main

problem for builders in this regard is that declining land values have led to reduced appraisals, making it more difficult to demonstrate a project's economic feasibility. As of January, 1995, a typical construction loan in Sonoma had a 7.5% interest rate with a 3 point fee. The construction loan market has been described as flat but stable.

Interest Rates and Home Purchasing Power¹

	<u>Very Low</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Moderate</u>
Annual Income:	\$24,200	\$38,700	\$58,100
Maximum Monthly Housing Cost (30% of Income):	\$605	\$968	\$1,452
Maximum Purchase Price With 20% Down Payment at:			
7% Interest:	\$114,000	\$182,000	\$273,000
8% Interest:	\$103,000	\$165,000	\$247,000
9% Interest:	\$94,000	\$150,000	\$226,000
10% Interest:	\$86,000	\$138,000	\$207,000
11% Interest:	\$79,000	\$127,000	\$191,000
12% Interest:	\$74,000	\$118,000	\$176,000

- 1) Based on four-person household, 20% down payment, 30-year loan, and 30% of household income devoted to housing costs.

Source: Community Development Department

Table 27

Housing prices have apparently fallen in the last year, as sellers who had been waiting for conditions to improve have lost patience. Declining prices and low interest rates have recently led to greater interest on the part of buyers and an increased volume of home sales. It seems likely that the backlog of houses on the market will prevent any run-up in prices in the near-term. Home loans are generally available for middle-income households. The interest rate on a 30-year fixed mortgage as of January, 1995, was 9.25 %, with a 1.5 point fee.

Lending for the construction of subsidized housing and the sale of affordable units presents special problems, since appraisers and banks have difficulty in working with the rent limits, equity caps, and re-sale restrictions typically imposed to ensure long-term affordability. These difficulties are often compounded by state and federal requirements for maintaining affordability, which are in direct conflict with lending laws and guidelines. The problems are not insurmountable, however, and the City and various private developers have obtained financing for the construction and subsequent sale of several affordable developments.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION

As energy costs rise, it becomes increasingly important to provide a range of energy conservation measures, from the community-wide to the project-specific. The 1995 General Plan addresses this issue in several ways, including the basic land use strategy of confining future development to a compact area, within and adjacent to existing city limits, thereby reducing driving times and encouraging alternatives to auto use. To the same end, the Land Use Plan locates mixed-use and multi-family residential development in and around service and commercial areas. Small, neighborhood-scale commercial development is proposed to serve existing residential areas. At the project level, the City's Subdivision Ordinance requires, pursuant to state law, that developments be designed to maximize opportunities for solar heating and cooling. At the level of individual structures, California has adopted extremely thorough energy conservation requirements, particularly for residential construction. These requirements are enforced by the City's Building Department.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The City has conducted a broad-based effort to inform and involve the community in the revision of the General Plan and the Housing Element. To date, the City has conducted 14 town hall meetings on the General Plan update. The first series of meetings, which occurred in August and September of 1992, were designed as community forums for the discussion of broad issues to be addressed in the General Plan update. These meetings were preceded by the publication and distribution of a "General Plan Handbook," which provided background information and analysis on the broad areas to be addressed in the plan. The meetings began with a discussion of housing, land use and growth, which was followed by sessions devoted to public facilities, the environment, the local economy, and town character and design. In October of 1992, an additional hearing was held to obtain comments on preliminary land use plans developed in response to the community discussion.

A second round of hearings was held in January through March of 1993. These, too, were preceded by a handbook, this one containing draft goals and policies as well as alternative draft land use plans. The sessions began with comments and dialog on the draft goals and policies, while later sessions focused on specific topics, including the preferred sphere of influence line and discussions of housing issues, the economy, and land use.

In order to provide a venue which was larger and more conducive to group discussion and interaction than the City's council chambers, these sessions were held at the Sonoma Community Center.

Public notice for all of the sessions was provided in the local newspaper, which itself ran several articles on the subject. Sign-up sheets were provided at each session, from which the City developed a mailing list of participants that was used to provide additional notice.

Following the publication of the draft General Plan, another series of public hearings and study sessions was conducted by the Planning Commission. These hearings took place between September of 1993 and January of 1995. A total of ten public hearings and fifteen study sessions were held during that period. From January, 1995 to August 30, 1995, when the plan was finally adopted, the City Council held another ten public hearings.

REVIEW OF EXISTING HOUSING ELEMENT

Sonoma's 1985 Housing Element established a five year objective of developing 197 affordable housing units, 141 units from program initiatives and 56 units from projects which had been approved but were not yet built. The estimate of pipeline units turned out to be understated, as 77 affordable units were gained through previously approved development. These units are divided between the 34-unit Sonoma Creek project, a senior apartment complex developed by the City, and 43 units in the 164-unit Wine Country House, a congregate care facility for seniors. (The units in the Wine Country House qualify as residences because they include individual kitchenettes.)

In terms of new housing, the following projects were approved between 1985 and 1990:

- The City participated in a 7-unit senior apartment development, along with Sonoma County and the Burbank Housing Authority.
- Approximately 37 affordable units were constructed through the density bonus program or as affordable second units.
- Another 24 affordable units were approved through the density bonus program but, to date, have not been built.

In all, 144 affordable units were approved during the five-year program period and 113 were built, 84 units short of the goal. The reasons for the shortfall are various. The density bonus program produced less than five units during that period. More importantly, while the City had experienced success with the senior apartment project developed by the CDA, its resources were too limited to produce much housing on its own and it had not yet developed partnerships with private developers. Another factor was the Growth Management Ordinance, which at that time exempted

only government-sponsored affordable units. As development pressure increased in Sonoma, applications for mixed market-rate/affordable projects gradually declined.

Many important policies and implementation programs identified in the 1985 General Plan Housing Element were successfully implemented and continue to aid in the provision of housing. The density bonus program, priority processing, and fee waivers, as called for in Policy HE-2 of the 1985 element, have helped make the difference for many affordable developments in town. The City has maintained and upgraded its parcel data base and accompanying map and has developed a variety of informational materials for prospective developers of affordable housing. In addition, the City's application requirements have been streamlined.

The 1995 Housing Element incorporates the lessons learned from the City's experiences since 1985, including many positive steps which have already been taken. Some of the most notable new policies, programs, and initiatives are as follows:

- In 1989, the City Council amended the Growth Management Ordinance to exempt 100% affordable projects from the waiting restriction. This change in policy prompted many successful applications for affordable developments, including 47 units which have been constructed and another 71 which have been approved but not yet built. (The exemption was eliminated in 1994, however.)
- The City is maximizing the use of its redevelopment funds for affordable housing by creating partnerships with private developers. These funds have been used to buy down land costs, provide downpayment assistance for first-time home-buyers, and rehabilitate existing units.
- The City has been successful in obtaining Community Development Block Grant funding for land purchases and land cost write-downs, downpayment assistance for first-time home-buyers, and mobile home rehabilitation.
- Through the creation of the Sonoma Community Housing Corporation, the City Council has established a mechanism for implementing housing programs and promoting fair housing practices. The 1995 Housing Element includes an implementation measure to expand the City's efforts to educate the community about fair housing practices.
- By adopting a mobile home rent control ordinance, the City Council has protected the community's largest sector of affordable senior housing.



Sonoma's mobile home parks represent an important stock of relatively low cost senior housing that needs to be preserved. The City has made available \$150,000 for rehabilitation of mobile homes. This money was obtained from the Community Development Block Grant program, one of the few sources of federal money remaining to local governments.

- In 1988, the City Council placed an Article 34 referendum on the ballot seeking authorization for the construction of up to 60 units. The measure was adopted by a 64% margin, underscoring the broad community support for the provision of affordable housing.
- In response to the recent loss of shelter opportunities for the homeless, the 1995 Housing Element includes implementation programs to accomplish the following: 1) revise the Zoning Ordinance to allow emergency shelters within the Public Control zone and certain commercial zoning districts, and 2) work with Sonoma County to develop an emergency shelter within Sonoma Valley.
- A five-year action program is provided, as required by state law, for the development of affordable units to meet community needs and for the conservation of the existing affordable housing stock.
- The 1995 General Plan, through the Housing Element and the Community Development Element, includes a variety of policies and programs to ensure that new residential development will include a variety of housing types and will be well-integrated with existing neighborhoods.
- By establishing mixed use areas and promoting mixed use development, the 1995 Housing Element (in conjunction with the Community Development Element) will reduce auto dependence and encourage walking.

In summary, the Housing Element of the 1995 General plan attempts to address deficiencies found in the implementation of the previous housing element, while building on recent successes.

CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

This revision of the Housing Element has been developed in conjunction with a larger update of Sonoma's General Plan. The 1995 update began with a focus on the Community Development, Housing, Circulation, and Conservation and Open Space Elements of the 1985 General Plan. In the course of the public hearing process, the topics of town design, the local economy, and environmental resources were established as additional major issue areas. Because the revision of the Housing Element has occurred in the context of an overall general plan update, the City has been able to ensure full coordination and consistency with all other elements of the General Plan. This issue is further addressed in the introduction to the Housing Element.



Environment

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan



ENVIRONMENT

OPEN SPACE

The term “open space” includes a variety of land use categories. Very little land that might be considered open space is actually vacant. The following is a summary of definitions of broad categories of open space:

Planning Definitions

These definitions are derived from state planning guidelines. In some cases, an open space parcel may fit more than one category.

Lands for Habitat Protection: This type of open space land contains natural habitats which the community has determined should be preserved and enhanced. In general, this category might include forests, deserts, riparian areas, and other valuable habitats. In Sonoma, creeks and riparian corridors, hillsides and unique habitats would qualify as protected habitat areas. The protection of these areas is typically implemented through appropriate land use designations and policies.

Lands for Managed Resource Production: This category includes open space lands which are actively used for resource production, such as timber lands and farmlands. In Sonoma, this category would include several parcels within the city under agricultural preserve contract. These parcels are protected by appropriate land use and zoning designations.

Lands for Outdoor Recreation: Within this category are parks and other outdoor recreational facilities. Although technically “open space,” these areas may be highly developed and intensively used. A skate park would fit into this category, as would a neighborhood park. The Sonoma area has a great deal of land in this category, ranging from the larger, regional Maxwell Farms Park to the smaller, neighborhood Pinelli Park.

Lands for Public Safety: Included in this category are lands which are subject to strict development regulations because of public safety concern. Steep hillsides, fire-prone areas, earthquake zones, and flood plains would all fall under this definition, as would areas within the one-hundred year flood plain.

Additional Categories

In addition to these standard categories, three additional categories may be found useful for definition.

Scenic Units: A scenic landscape unit is defined here as a large, distinct geographic unit which provides a scenic resource. A ridge-line might fall within this definition, as might an expanse of agricultur-

al land. The “community separator” or “greenbelt” concept expressed in the recent town meetings on the development of the General Plan could also be included in this category.

Rural Character: This category is something of a catch-all intended as a niche for the many small, partially developed parcels in Sonoma and Sonoma Valley which, although not appropriate for an agricultural or habitat protection designation, do contribute to the rural character of the area.

Vacant Land: Within this category are those parcels which are simply vacant and have no value as habitat, parkland, or resource production lands, and contribute little in terms of rural character. A typical example would be a small, weedy, undeveloped lot within city limits and largely surrounded by development.

EXISTING OPEN SPACE PROGRAMS

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

In November, 1990, Sonoma County voters approved Measures A and C, which were placed on the ballot for open space and agricultural land preservation in the county. Measure A established the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, while Measure C provided the financing for acquisition of open space and agricultural lands through a 1/4 percent transaction and use (sales) tax over a 20-year period. To illustrate, under Measure C, for every 100 dollars of taxable purchases made in the county, 25 cents is collected to preserve its rural character. In addition to the sales tax, the District may finance land acquisition and management through gifts, grants, trusts, and other sources of revenue authorized by law.

The boundaries of the District are the same as those of Sonoma County. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors serves as the District’s Board of Directors. The District also has a 17-member advisory committee appointed by the District members. The committee is comprised of representatives from various interest groups and the cities in the county and is charged with making recommendations to the District Board regarding proposed land and conservation easement acquisitions.

Acquisitions will generally occur on lands designated in the Sonoma County General Plan Open Space Element and identified in the District’s Acquisition Plan. The stated objective of the Acquisition Plan is as follows: “Over a 20-year period, the District shall seek to acquire interest in Sonoma County’s agricultural, natural resource and open space lands in a manner which will encourage and promote their perpetual preservation.”

The District uses the following criteria to evaluate and prioritize areas of interest:

- Consideration of areas within existing open space designations, with priority being given to community separators;
- Consideration of areas near existing protected lands;
- Cooperation with other agencies in preserving land;
- Protection of crucial natural resource areas;
- Protection of agricultural lands under threat of conversion or loss to urban development;
- Protection of resource or scenic lands threatened by development or other adverse land use changes;

The Acquisition Plan designates land immediately to the north and southwest of Sonoma as Category 2 lands. Category 2 lands are defined as those areas important for maintaining the scenic quality of the county and for allowing for continued agricultural productivity. The plan also designates certain areas further to the north of Sonoma and further southwest and southeast as Category 3 lands. Category 3 lands will be acted on by the District in cooperation with other agencies when any major change in circumstances threatens important resources, or where opportunities such as bargain sales and gifts may occur. Further discussion of how the District acquires property is included later in the Acquisition and Preservation Methodologies section.

City of Sonoma

With regard to open space, the proposed goals, policies and implementation measures of the General Plan Environmental Resources Element represent the City of Sonoma's open space acquisition and preservation effort. These goals, policies and implementation measures are summarized below.

Land Use Strategy: Taken as a whole, the City's 1995 General Plan follows the concept of city-centered growth. In brief, the Plan directs controlled growth within and adjacent to the existing city. The Plan calls for compact development at urban densities in order to avoid sprawling, semi-rural development, which provides fewer housing units, requires more land, and encroaches onto the truly agricultural areas surrounding the city. Environmental Resource Element policies provide that open space acquisition and preservation be contingent on community support and be based on a network of public and private spaces that reflect the natural characteristics of Sonoma.

The County General Plan also promotes the concept of city-centered growth on a county-wide scale as the best means of preserving agricultural land while providing for a moderate amount of development in or immediately adjacent to urbanized areas.

Habitat Protection: The Environmental Resources Element includes policies to protect and enhance creeks and riparian corridors, hill-sides, and habitats for special species, such as the federally-listed rare and endangered species *Blennosperma bakerii* (or Sonoma sunshine), through the following policy directions:

- Protect and enhance riparian corridors and perennial creeks.
- Prohibit development on ridgelines.
- Strictly control and monitors hillside development.
- Preserve habitats which support rare or endangered species.

Resource Areas: The Environmental Resources Element also recognizes the importance of agricultural lands within and surrounding the city and contains policies protecting and encouraging agricultural activities:

- Agricultural preserves within the city that have not terminated their preserve status were assigned agricultural land use designations.
- Agricultural preserves outside the city limits serve as a recognized greenbelt surrounding Sonoma.
- Agricultural activities and uses are encouraged.
- The city's sphere of influence was drawn to avoid encroaching onto agricultural lands.

Outdoor Recreation: There are approximately 187 acres of parkland within and adjacent to the city, including a regional park, historic parks, community parks, and neighborhood parks. The General Plan includes a number of policies and implementation measures regarding parklands, including the following directions:

- A neighborhood parkland-to-population ratio will be maintained.
- A master community recreation plan addressing unmet and future park and recreation needs will be developed.
- Bicycle and pedestrian networks will connect recreation and cultural facilities.

Lands for Public Safety: Flood plain areas are the only such lands identified in the General Plan within the sphere of influence.

- Development in the flood plain is strictly regulated.
- Creeks and riparian corridors are protected as natural greenways.

Scenic Units: The City's General Plan does not refer to scenic units as such. The hillside backdrop and the large areas of agricultural land surrounding the city, the two areas which could fall into this category, are protected, however, as discussed above. The hillside backdrop is recognized as a distinct and important visual resource. Development on hillside areas is addressed at the policy and implementation level to limit development. The agricultural lands surrounding the city are protected by concentrating future development within and adjacent to the city. As discussed above, the General Plan also includes policies protecting existing agricultural and open space lands and encouraging agricultural activities. Taken together, these policies combine in the General Plan to refer to the hillside backdrop and the surrounding agricultural lands as a greenbelt to be protected and maintained.

Rural Character: As with scenic units, the General Plan does not discuss rural and semi-rural parcels as open space. It does, however, designate a substantial amount of land for rural residential development. Within the sphere of influence, most of the land set aside for low density development is located on the northern and eastern fringes of existing city limits.

Vacant Land: Vacant land, as such, is not protected in the General Plan unless it happens to fall under one of the specific open space categories discussed above. In general, however, lands designated for open space protection are not considered vacant because they do not have any further development potential. For example, agricultural parcels would not be included in a vacant land inventory because they are considered to be fully developed in their current use. The term "vacant" usually implies the existence of at least some development potential.

OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

Agricultural Preserves

The following table lists the properties within the city of Sonoma and land to the southwest, south and east of Sonoma that are under Williamson Act Contracts. These contracts are ten-year agreements that provide the landowner with a reduced tax status in exchange for keeping the subject property in agricultural use. The contracts are renewed annually, unless the property owners

notify the County that they intend to terminate the agricultural preserve status. This table corresponds with the agricultural preserves (AP) noted on the Environmental Resources map.

There are ten parcels to the southwest of Sonoma totaling 787.17 acres of land currently in Williamson Act contracts. Additionally, there are eight properties to the east of Sonoma totaling 845.20 acres in agricultural preserves. Agricultural preserves within and nearby the city are shown on the Environmental Resources Map.

Agricultural Preserves				
<u>Parcel #</u>	<u>A.P.#</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>General Plan Designation¹</u>	<u>Notice of Non-renewal</u>
1	127-051-70	20.11		
2	127-051-49	15.84		
3	127-162-18	27.95		
4	127-161-07	3.96	Agricultural	
5	127-161-06	7.01	Agricultural	
6	127-111-65	19.52		
7	127-051-38	35.00		
8	023-050-08	3.46	Agricultural	Yes
9	023-030-01	19.58	Agricultural	Yes
10	128-361-12	11.60		
11	126-361-07	20.81		
12	128-373-02	87.06		
13	128-412-02	28.40		
Subtotal:		300.30		
Ag. preserves to southwest:		787.17		
Ag. preserves to east:		845.20		
Total:		1,932.67		

1) Properties inside sphere of influence only.

Source: Community Development Department

Table 28

Agricultural Land in Sonoma

Agricultural uses within the city limits and the sphere of influence are limited to a few properties. Typical uses include vineyards, grazing, horse pastures, and vegetable gardens. Some of the more notable of these properties are listed in the following table:

**Summary of Agriculture Properties
Within City Limits**

<u>Property</u>	<u>Agricultural Use</u>
Castagnasso East Spain/Second Street East	Horse Pasture
Montini - 120 Fifth Street West	Grazing
Smith - 700 Curtin Lane	Vineyard
Leveroni Fifth Street West/Leveroni Road	Hay production
Haraszthy/Vallejo Home 400 West Spain St.	Garden
Sebastiani Lovall Valley Road	Vineyard
The Patch 260 Second Street East	Garden
277 Fourth Street East	Vineyard
McTaggart North of East Napa, East of Fourth St.	Vineyard
19343 Sonoma Highway	Vineyard
Bond Property Seventh Street East	Community Garden
Casa Grande Lot Behind Sonoma Barracks	Community Garden ¹

1) Proposed but not yet implemented.

Source: Community Development Department

Table 29

The Bond property was bequeathed to the City for future park purposes. The Sonoma Ecology Center, through its Sonoma Community Agricultural Project, has developed it as a community farm and garden. The Casa Grande site is owned by the State and leased to the City for use as a parking lot. A portion of this site is also proposed for use as a community garden. In addition to the properties listed above, there are other parcels in and around Sonoma that include agricultural uses, such as small vineyards, gardens, and horse pastures. Opportunities to preserve selected parcels will be addressed through the Environmental Resources Element implementation measures, including evaluating the possibility of acquiring specific parcels for open space preservation.

Creeks and Riparian Corridors

There are three main creeks in Sonoma: Sonoma Creek, Fryer Creek and Nathanson Creek (the creek locations are indicated on the Environmental Resources map).

Sonoma Creek is located at the city's western boundary. The city limit line runs in the center of the creek, with half of the creek within the city limits and half in the county. The creek has not been channelized for flood control purposes and remains in its natural state. Sonoma Creek, in the area of the city, tends to be deeply channeled and heavily vegetated.

Fryer Creek runs in a north/south direction in the western part of Sonoma. Some portions of it have been channelized for flood control, while other portions have been placed underground because of development. Additionally, some parts of the creek are located in private property, others are in City rights-of-way, and still other parts are owned by the Sonoma County Water Agency. Access is readily available from adjacent bike paths.

Nathanson Creek lies in the eastern portion of Sonoma and is mostly contained within private property. As with Fryer Creek, it generally runs from north to south. It is above-ground, except where bridges have been built for the roadway network. The primary public interfaces are located at Nathanson Creek Park and Grinstead Park.

Vacant and Underutilized Properties Adjacent to Creeks

<u>Assessors Parcel No.</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>General Plan Designation</u>	<u>Creek</u>
127-141-06	5.93	Mixed Use	Sonoma Creek
018-443-05	2.22	Commercial	Sonoma Creek
018-550-14	6.67	Sonoma Res.	Sonoma Creek
018-232-21	2.47	Low Density Res.	Nathanson Creek
018-262-14	3.14	Low Density Res.	Nathanson Creek
128-091-04	9.13	Sonoma Res.	Nathanson Creek
023-030-01	18.67	Agricultural	Nathanson Creek
128-271-09	2.69	Commercial	Nathanson Creek
128-271-01	4.34	Commercial	Nathanson Creek
128-271-07	1.83	Medium Density Res.	Nathanson Creek
128-271-08	2.30	Medium Density Res.	Nathanson Creek
018-401-43 ¹	2.38	Medium Density Res.	Fryer Creek
128-071-47	1.75	Medium Density Res.	Fryer Creek
128-131-41	5.47	Sonoma Res.	Fryer Creek
128-162-38	2.39	Low Density Res.	Fryer Creek
.....			

1) Properties on which development has been approved.

Source: Community Development Department

Table 30

All three creeks feature riparian corridors, except where the creeks have been recently channelized or placed underground. Portions of channelized creeks have, over time, returned to a more natural condition. One is the southern portion of Fryer Creek, just north of Leveroni Road, where the Sonoma County Water Agency has replanted native plant materials along the creek to further return it to its natural state. This effort contributes to the riparian habitat, provides erosion control, and enhances the creek as a scenic amenity.

Creeks are a primary open space feature in the city—their riparian corridors are a significant habitat for a variety of animals and birds, and they provide a habitat and waterway link between the hills to the north and other waterways and the Bay to the south. Riparian vegetation associated with creeks is crucial to stream stability, water quality and wildlife. Implementation measures in the Environmental Resource Element require the inclusion of preservation and restoration opportunities for creeks and creek habitats in the Town Design Ordinance. Such opportunities may arise as development applications are made for properties adjacent to creeks. A partial listing of these properties is provided in Table 30.

Wetlands

Vernal pools, a type of wetland, are depressed areas where water ponds for relatively short periods during the winter and spring rainy season and into the summer, but which are dry during the rest of the year. They occur exclusively in Mediterranean climates, such as northern California, where there are hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. The pools are fed by rainwater, which collects in depressions in the ground that have no surface outlet. Water is unable to flow on the surface out of the pools, and its percolation into the ground is prevented or strongly inhibited by an impermeable layer of clay or hardpan. Because of the hydrologic cycle associated with vernal pools, they support a set of unique plants and animals specifically adapted to the short wet period. Vernal pools are considered to be botanically sensitive habitats by the California Natural Diversity Data Base as they are relatively rare and are subject to destruction through development projects.

Baker's blennosperma is a small plant, also known as Sonoma sunshine and Baker's stickyweed, which lives in vernal pools in portions of Sonoma County. In 1991, Baker's blennosperma was listed as a federally endangered species, and it is classified on List 1B (rare, threatened or endangered in California and elsewhere) of the California Native Plant Society. The plant is included on the federal list because the plant faces extinction as a result of urban development, conversion of native habitats to agriculture, competition from non-native grasses, overgrazing by livestock, and random extinction by virtue of the small, isolated nature of many of

the remaining populations.

Known vernal pools and Baker's blennosperma habitats are located in southwest Sonoma, west of Broadway and north of Leveroni Road (see Environmental Resources map). A vernal pool relocation experiment was conducted as part of the Montclair Park residential subdivision. As mitigation for vernal pools and the Baker's blennosperma habitat that existed on the project site, vernal pools were recreated in the southern portion of Carter Park. Although extensive efforts were made to make the areas a viable vernal pool habitat, the California Department of Fish and Game recently determined that the experiment did not succeed. Based on that experience, any significant remaining vernal pool habitats in Sonoma will be required to be preserved and enhanced.

Hillside Areas

The hills to the north of Sonoma provide a unique scenic amenity and serve as a permanent "greenbelt" to the north. Schocken Hill lies to the north/northwest of the city, with accompanying hillsides directly to the north. Most of the hillside areas that can be seen from vistas in the community are outside the existing city limits and the sphere of influence, with the exception of the Mountain Cemetery, which lies directly to the north of the Veterans' Building and Arnold Field (see Land Use Plan in the Community Development Element). City limits and the sphere of influence are contiguous at the northern edge of Sonoma.

The land that lies within the city limits and sphere of influence is somewhat parcelized. The properties at the base of Schocken Hill are of various sizes and configurations and are sparsely developed with hillside residential and agricultural uses. The hillside properties north of the Vallejo Home State Park that lie within the city limits/sphere of influence are virtually undeveloped and feature agricultural (grazing) and public facility (water tanks) uses. Hillside elevations within the city limits range from 100 feet to 219 feet and 236 feet at two peaks north of the Vallejo Home and 100 feet to 425 feet at Schocken Hill.

As is typical of woodland areas, the hillsides are somewhat densely vegetated with a variety of trees, shrubs and grasses. This mix of plant materials provides habitats for many animals. Typical plants include a variety of oak trees and a blend of different native grasses. Typical animals include mammals, such as black-tailed deer, mountain lion and fox, and a wide variety of birds, reptiles and amphibians. The hills to the north are of particular importance in that they not only are a scenic resource but have a high habitat value. These habitats are the resource for and provide a physical connection to open space within the city limits.

Parks

A network of city, county and state parks in and around Sonoma serve as areas of permanent open space (see table 30). From the larger Maxwell Farms Regional Park, serving Sonoma Valley residents and visitors, to the neighborhood parks, such as Olsen and Pinelli, lands owned and managed by public agencies and developed for public recreational use contribute significantly to the community's open space. Vallejo Home State Park, for example, is the largest tract of permanent open space in Sonoma. Comprised of approximately 58 acres of open park land and the historic Vallejo home, it provides a view corridor to the hillsides to the north of Sonoma and is set aside as open space. Following is a table of the city, county and state parks serving the Sonoma area. Refer to the Recreation section of the Technical Appendix for a complete description of park facilities and services.

Open Space: Parks

<u>Park Facility</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Plaza Park	8.5
Depot Park	4.6
Olsen Park	2.0
Pinelli Park	0.5
Eraldi Park	5.6
Nathanson Creek Park/Roland Hauck Nature Area	2.8
Hertenstein Park	0.8
Jean K.T. Carter Park	2.0
Grinstead Park	0.1
Bond Property (Community Farm)	7.0
Armstrong Park (approved for construction)	1.5
Madera Park (approved for construction)	2.9
Fryer Creek Village (approved for construction)	0.4
MacArthur Estates Park (approved for construction)	0.7
Field of Dreams	7.0
Arnold Field	4.9
Maxwell Farms Regional Park	89.0
Vallejo Home State Park	57.7
Total:	198.0

Source: Community Development Department

Table 31

Bikepaths

There are a variety of Class 1, 2 and 3 bike paths in and around Sonoma that serve as open space and link other recreational and

cultural uses. A Class 1 bike path is a paved path devoted to public cycling, walking, jogging, and other similar activities. An example of a class 1 path is the path along the Northwestern Pacific right-of-way which runs east/west from Fourth Street East to Sonoma Highway. This bike path links public open spaces such as Depot Park, Vallejo Home State Park, Olsen Park and Maxwell Farms Regional Park. Class 2 bike lanes are typically striped along both sides of public streets. An example of a Class 2 path is the one along Nathanson Creek Park. Class 3 bike lanes are signed bicycle routes. Sonoma County and the State of California have designated Highway 12 as a Class 3 touring route. Refer to the Circulation Element for complete information regarding existing and proposed bike paths. Class 1 bike paths are also delineated on the Environmental Resources map (page 70).

ACQUISITION AND PRESERVATION METHODOLOGIES

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

The District acquires interests in real property primarily through the purchase of conservation easements from willing sellers, but also through purchase of fee title, contributions of land, life estates and transfer of development rights (TDR) programs. The willingness of sellers, the complexity of determining fair land and easement values, and varying market conditions all help determine the rate of acquisitions. The District will develop policies and procedures for property management of its lands. In order to ensure minimum operating expenditures, the District may contract with existing park or other appropriate agency staff for land management. They may also organize a group of landowners and volunteers to monitor and manage easements.

Preservation Policies

The General Plan includes goals, policies and implementation measures in the Environmental Resources Element for the preservation and enhancement of open space. Goal ERE-1 is to "Acquire and protect important open space in and around Sonoma." Several policies are designed to fulfill that goal by protecting hill-sides and the "greenbelt" surrounding Sonoma, providing adequate private and public open space, and assisting the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District in identifying and acquiring, where possible, open space. Implementation measures have been developed to provide an overall framework for ensuring that the preservation and enhancement of open space is a priority for future land use considerations. The measures require the preparation of an open space plan which identifies specific existing open space areas to be preserved and defines methodologies for preservation, dedication and acquisition

for all identified properties; including parcels comprising the “greenbelt.” They also provide for the preparation of hillside development guidelines to protect hillsides from excessive development, the identification of creek preservation and restoration opportunities for the creeks in Sonoma, and measures to promote, preserve and enhance local agriculture, in addition to other measures specifically designed to provide for the long-term protection of the existing open space.



The preservation of the hillsides adjacent to the city is likely to be a priority in any open space acquisition ventures the City pursues.

Preservation Techniques

There are a variety of open space preservation techniques in addition to those used by the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District. Examples of these include:

- *Mello-Roos District:* Local government may levy special taxes and issue bonds to finance open space acquisition, maintenance and other programs.
- *General Obligation Bonds:* Local government may issue bonds for the acquisition and improvement of real property, including open space.
- *Special Assessments:* Local government may assess property owners for open space purposes.
- *Lease-Purchasing:* A lease-purchase is, in effect, a loan. A local agency leases land purchased by another party and maintains it as open space.

- *Certificates of Participation*: A financing method used in conjunction with lease-purchases for expensive tracts of land.
- *Open Space Easements*: Cities, counties, and non-profit agencies may acquire open space easements pursuant to the Open Space Easement Act of 1974. The land must remain within an easement in perpetuity or, alternatively, for at least ten years, with options for renewal.
- *Dedication*: Local agencies may require that a portion of a proposed development be dedicated to the agency and maintained as open space.
- *Options*: Options provide a land trust with a temporary interest in a property while funds are raised to enable permanent acquisition.
- *Rights-of-First-Refusal*: Similar to an option, a right-of-first-refusal is an agreement between a landowner and a land trust specifying that if the former receives an offer to buy the property or decides to put it on the market, the land trust will have a specified period of time in which to match the offer before the property will be sold to anyone else.

These are just a few examples of the many tools which local agencies, open space districts and land trust organizations can utilize to acquire open space. In developing an open space plan, as is required by the Environmental Resources Element implementation measures, the City of Sonoma will evaluate all open space acquisition and preservation techniques in order to identify the most viable means of protecting open space in and around Sonoma.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION MECHANISMS

Resource conservation is defined as the preservation and enhancement of the many natural forms that shape our environment. Conservation techniques address how natural resources, such as streams and hillsides, may be protected. Natural resources are managed through a variety of mechanisms designed to preserve natural features and enhance resources, where possible. The Environmental Resources Element includes goals, policies and implementation measures to ensure protection of the natural environment. The overall purpose of these measures is to preserve the natural features in and around Sonoma that make a significant visual contribution to the small-town, rural atmosphere and play an important role in the health of Sonoma Valley's ecosystem. Descriptions of the community's natural resources, including creeks and riparian corridors, wetlands, hillsides, agriculture, parks and other open space are provided earlier in this chapter. To avoid repetition, those descriptions are not repeated here. The fol-

lowing is a list of existing policies and programs, apart from those established in the General Plan, designed to preserve natural resources.

AB 939

In 1989, the state legislature passed the California Integrated Waste Management Act (Assembly Bill 939, commonly referred to as AB 939). AB 939 required each city and county to accomplish the following:

- Divert 25% of its landfilled waste by the year 1995 and 50% by the year 2000.
- Reduce the amount of waste and hazardous material used and generated by households.
- Provide for the safe recycling or disposal of such wastes.
- Ensure that householders have and use adequate means to manage these wastes safely.

The bill required the preparation and adoption of a Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE), a document designed to lay the basis for future actions regarding garbage rates, recycling programs, local composting and other measures intended to reduce waste generation, increase recycling and preserve landfill capacity. It also required the preparation of a Household Hazardous Waste Element (HHWE), a document intended to outline the basis for future actions regarding the collection and disposal of hazardous wastes generated by households. Because the AB 939 requirements apply to all cities and counties, the cities of Sonoma County joined forces with the County to hire a single consultant to prepare SRREs and HHWEs for each city and for the County. The documents were prepared in conjunction with a Local Task Force composed of representatives from each city, the County, and local commercial garbage haulers and recyclers, as well as representatives of the general public and environmental groups. The elements were reviewed, revised and adopted over the course of numerous public meetings.

The SRRE addresses the following topics:

- Source reduction (avoiding the creation of waste, e.g., by reducing the amount of product packaging).
- Recycling (the collection, processing and re-use of discarded materials).
- Composting (the conversion of organic waste into humus or

fertilizer).

- Special Waste (objects or materials which require special handling, such as tires or scrap metals).
- Education (instilling awareness of waste diversion goals and programs).
- Disposal capacity (maximizing the capacity and efficiency of existing and future disposal facilities).

The HHWE addresses the following topics:

- Source reduction (avoiding the creation of waste, e.g., by using alternative substances which are not hazardous).
- Recycling (the collection, processing and re-use of discarded materials)
- Access (ensuring that all residents are readily able to make use of collection programs and facilities).
- Education (instilling awareness of source reduction techniques and collection programs and facilities).
- Collection (providing safe and accessible opportunities for the collection of household hazardous wastes).
- Monitoring (reviewing and evaluating the City's source reduction, recycling, collection and disposal programs to gauge their success and identify opportunities for improvement).

Biotic Resources Ordinance

The Sonoma City Council adopted a Biotic Resources Ordinance in July, 1993, which went into effect August 8, 1993. The purpose of the ordinance is to ensure that all trees, some shrubs, and all watercourses and riparian habitats in Sonoma are protected to the greatest extent possible. The main provisions of the ordinance are:

- All work in the public right-of-way that falls within the drip-line of an existing tree (whether on public or private property) shall require a report from a certified arborist on the potential impacts of the proposed construction and remedial steps to protect the tree(s).
- All tentative maps shall include the scientific name, common name, trunk diameter and location of all trees on the property, regardless of size. For properties in the Historic Conservation Combining ("H") zoning district, the map must include the same information on all mature shrubs.

- Street designs shall be modified whenever feasible to protect existing trees located in the proposed right-of-way.
- Improvement plan submittals must include an arborist's report detailing the steps to be taken to protect existing trees and shrubs during construction activities.
- Removal of trees and shrubs on any property in the "H" zone, in conjunction with an approved conditional use permit, shall be subject to the approval of the Architectural Review Commission.
- Site plans for conditional use permits and planned unit development (PUD) permits shall include the scientific name, common name, trunk diameter and location of all trees on the property. For properties in the "H" zoning district, the map must include the same information on all mature shrubs.

Implementation of the ordinance shall be through review of applications for improvements to public or private property.

Xeriscape Ordinance

The Water Conservation in Landscaping Act (AB 325), adopted by the state legislature in 1990, required that cities and counties adopt a water-efficient landscape (or xeriscape) ordinance by January 1, 1993. If a local jurisdiction fails to adopt its own ordinance, the law provides that the model ordinance developed by the State automatically becomes the local law. The Environmental Advisory Commission developed a proposed xeriscape ordinance; the ordinance was adopted by the Sonoma City Council in December, 1992.

The ordinance limits water use associated with landscaping in three basic ways: by limiting turf area, by encouraging the use of native plants and other vegetation with low water use requirements, and by requiring water-efficient irrigation systems. It is implemented by the Architectural Review Commission and applies to projects for which architectural review is already required. Some other characteristics of the ordinance and considerations which went into it are listed below.

- In order to allow for flexibility in the administration of the ordinance, many of its provisions are in the form of guidelines rather than strict requirements. This approach was taken for several reasons: to encourage creative proposals; to allow relief when unusual circumstances might warrant exceptions; to limit the potential burden on affected property owners; and to recognize that the City does not yet have much practical experience in this area.

- As noted above, one means by which the proposed ordinance would limit water use is through a limitation on turf area. This approach differs from that used in the model ordinance developed by the State's Department of Water Resources, which is designed to actually limit the amount of water applied to a landscaped area. The only way to accomplish the method proposed by the State is through a requirement for a separate water system, including a separate water meter, to serve the landscaping of a site. This requirement seemed unduly expensive and burdensome, so the turf limitation approach was used instead.
- The scope of the ordinance is limited to the promotion of water-conserving landscaping. It does not address landscape aesthetics, requirements for tree plantings, or other such issues which, although important, were not sufficiently defined to incorporate into the ordinance.

Water Conservation Program

The City of Sonoma's Water Conservation Program involves providing educational materials and retrofit equipment to the citizenry. The purpose is to promote public awareness of the need for and means to conserve water. Educational materials include maps describing Sonoma's water source and how it gets from the Russian River to Sonoma, plant lists identifying drought-tolerant plants appropriate for the local climate, and xeriscape videos, in addition to other brochures describing how individuals can conserve at home and at work. In the past, the City has also distributed retrofit equipment to homes in Sonoma. This equipment included devices to reduce the number of gallons per flush and showerhead flow restrictors. In addition, the City has an ordinance regulating procedures during water shortages. The ordinance also includes a voluntary conservation provision. Sonoma also participates in the Sonoma County Water Agency's educational program. The Water Agency distributes teaching materials to schools for water conservation public awareness at the student level.

Hazardous Materials Management Program

The Sonoma Fire Department is charged with the responsibility of managing the day-to-day responsibilities of the manufacture, use and storage of hazardous materials in the community. It ensures that local business and property owners are knowledgeable of and in compliance with laws regulating hazardous materials. Sonoma County and state environmental health divisions are the permitting entities for the use of hazardous wastes and are also responsible for accidents associated with toxic materials. For example, wastewater from a winery is classified as a hazardous waste. In this

case, Sonoma Fire Department staff would ensure that the inventory of hazardous materials was thorough, that appropriate safeguards were in place regarding the handling of the material, and that the winery staff were properly trained. The State or the County issue permits for the storage and transfer of the wastewater and would also be responsible in the case of an accident.

Ad Hoc Tree Committee

The ad hoc Tree Committee was appointed by the City Council early in 1993 and is composed of volunteers from the community. The purpose of the committee is to make recommendations regarding the preservation of existing trees in Sonoma and to define opportunities to enhance the tree population in the community. The committee's goal is to work with professional arborists, horticulturalists and landscape designers to prepare a plan that defines measures to protect, preserve and promote trees. As a first step in this effort, the committee has prepared an inventory of trees in Sonoma, including street trees, trees in parks and public areas, and significant trees on private property, and has identified heritage and historical trees. Now that this inventory is complete, it can be used as the basis for developing guidelines for recommended street trees and for protecting significant trees that contribute to the local environment, as well as for defining forestation and reforestation opportunities.

Another ongoing aspect of the ad hoc Tree Committee is its educational program. In 1993, the committee worked with the City of Sonoma and local schools to conduct a tree-planting program for Arbor Day. 15-gallon trees were donated to the schools and other trees were planted around the community. The purpose of the program is to increase awareness of the scenic and environmental benefits of preserving existing trees and planting new trees.

Sonoma Valley Watershed Council

The Sonoma Ecology Center has established the Sonoma Valley Watershed Council. The mission of the council is to "preserve, restore and enhance the Sonoma Creek and its aquifer, its riparian corridor and the watershed that sustains them through citizen action and involvement, public education, research and expert advocacy." The council is composed of citizens interested in protecting the local creek environs. The council's goals are to complete a comprehensive inventory of Sonoma Creek and its watershed; to restore fishery to self-sustaining levels; to preserve and restore the riparian corridor and the water in the creek; to provide public access where possible; to enhance the economic value of the creek and its watershed by promoting agriculture, tourism, and recreation; and to facilitate education on issues related to the creek.



A vernal pool area in southwest Sonoma. The City plans to link this site to other vernal pool sites in the area and provide limited public access through walking trails.

The goals of the Watershed Council are consistent with the Environmental Resources Element goals and policies, in that the common objective is to preserve and restore creeks and creek habitats in and around Sonoma.

Vernal Pool Preservation and Enhancement

Vernal pools are known to exist in southwest Sonoma on property west of Broadway and north of Leveroni Road formerly used for general agriculture (see the Open Space section of the Technical Appendix for discussion of vernal pools). As vernal pools and other types of wetlands are being lost to development, state and federal agencies charged with the responsibility of regulating wetlands are increasingly requiring preservation and enhancement of wetland sites. These agencies are the California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The alternative to preservation is creating new vernal pools in a different location or identifying other vernal pool sites and preserving and enhancing those as an exchange to allow development of the property that contains wetlands. Preservation and enhancement of vernal pool sites typically require permanent dedication of the land containing the vernal pools and the vernal pool watershed and long-term maintenance to ensure the sustained viability of the habitat.



Recreation

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan



RECREATION

OVERVIEW OF CITY PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

As summarized below, the efforts of the City to provide for the recreational needs of its citizens fall into four main areas: 1) basic facilities; 2) extended facilities; 3) partnerships with non-profit organizations; and, 4) grant-writing.

Basic Facilities: The City provides a network of neighborhood parks, community parks, and connecting bikeways that is available to all. These parks mainly provide opportunities for passive recreation and spontaneous games (as opposed to organized sports). These City facilities are supplemented by County facilities such as Maxwell Farms Regional Park, which is directly adjacent to city limits. In addition, the City provided the land for playing fields on the property surrounding the police station. These fields, known as the Field of Dreams project and funded by private sources, were completed in the Spring of 1994. This complex represents a substantial addition to the city's recreation facilities.

Extended Facilities: In addition to its involvement with these more typical parks facilities, the City has worked with other agencies and individuals to provide additional facilities. For example, the City has an agreement with the School District under which Eraldi Park is made available for general public use in exchange for its maintenance by the City. The City also has a long-term lease with the owner of the Sebastiani Theater that allows the City to maintain it as a movie theater. In addition, the City, in cooperation with a citizens advisory group and the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department, took the lead in the renovation of the Veterans' Memorial Building, perhaps the most widely used recreational facility in Sonoma Valley.

Public/Non-Profit Partnerships: In providing recreation programming, the City's philosophy has been to contract out to private non-profit providers such as the Boys and Girls Club and the Sonoma Community Center. However, recent budget constraints have forced the City to limit contributions to these organizations, which provide programs, classes, and activities year-round. The Boys and Girls Club focuses on providing recreational activities for youths and teens, while the Community Center, which also provides activities (such as teen dances) specifically intended for young people, primarily serves a broader spectrum of ages through its classes and productions. These partnerships represent an efficient use of public funds—the City is essentially paying for programs, while avoiding the personnel, administration, and overhead costs that would result if the City attempted to provide the programs directly. Contracting with existing providers also avoids the duplication of services and strengthens local recreation providers instead of competing with them.



These children are mixing it up with clay at the "Salute to the Arts," an annual Plaza event, in a booth provided by the Arts Guild of Sonoma.

In an ongoing example of public/non-profit cooperation, the City, along with the County and local recreation providers, is participating in the CSA 35 Committee. This ad hoc committee, established by the County Board of Supervisors in April, 1990, is charged with developing a long-range plan for the provision of sports facilities in Sonoma Valley. The committee includes representatives of the County Park staff, City staff, the School District, the Chamber of Commerce, and various Sonoma Valley recreational organizations, including the Boys and Girls Club. The group completed a comprehensive report on existing facilities in mid-1991.

Grants: To assist in the provision of recreational facilities, the City has obtained several different grants for various public improvements. From 1975 to 1990, more than \$865,000 was allocated to the City from the State Department of Parks and Recreation for improvements to parks and public buildings. The following table lists the improvements and the associated grants:

<i>Summary of Recreational Grant Funding</i>		
<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Grant Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Sonoma Plaza	1975-76	\$19,208
Depot Park	1976-77	\$68,625
Pinelli Park	1977-78	\$27,776
Depot Park O&M	1978-79	\$15,872
Depot Park	1978-79	\$94,312
Sassarini Park	1982-83	\$74,800
Sassarini Park	1983-84	\$94,828
Sassarini Park	1983-84	\$20,000
Sonoma Valley High	1984-85	\$90,000
Fryer Creek Bike Path	1987-88	\$68,112
Nathanson Creek Park	1987-88	\$20,000
Recreation Facilities	1989-90	\$22,000
Sonoma Veterans' Building	1989-90	\$250,000
Total		\$865,533

Source: Community Development Department

Table 32

Not included in this grant summary is the approximately \$250,000 in Community Development Block Grant funding which the City obtained for the seismic upgrading of the Sonoma Community Center.

INVENTORY OF PROGRAMS, PROVIDERS, AND FACILITIES

City Programs

Valley of the Moon Boys and Girls Club: The Boys and Girls Club is a private non-profit organization which provides a year-round program of activities from its headquarters on First Street West. The City sponsors the Summer Recreation program and traditionally has provided annual funding support for the Club's activities.

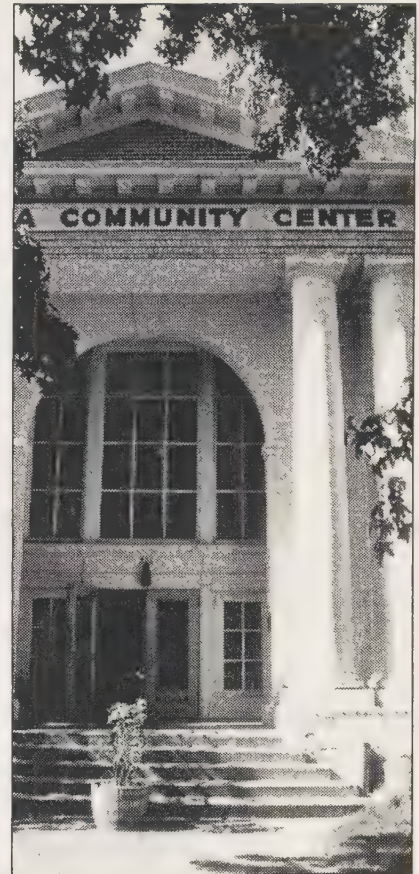
The City participated in a study of the Police Station property and its environs to determine its suitability for a development with playing fields and a new Boys and Girls Club facility. The result was approval by the City Council of the Field of Dreams complex, completed in 1994, a seven-acre facility which provides soccer fields, softball diamonds, and Little League diamonds.

Sonoma Community Center: The Community Center (owned and managed by a private non-profit corporation) is home to numerous classes and activities aimed at children and teenagers, including dance, gymnastics, and martial arts. The Center also sponsors teen dances, theater classes and productions, and other special events. Currently, the City provides annual funding for the support of these programs, but the level of funding has been variable due to budget constraints. The City did, however, obtain the grant funding used to make the building seismically safe and to install a fire sprinkler system and other life-safety features.

Sebastiani Theater: Through a lease with the property-owner, the City subsidizes the theater provider's rent in order to ensure that it continues to operate as a movie theater. The City also paid half the cost of installing a fire sprinkler system in the theater, an improvement which allows it to be used for live performances.

Veterans' Building: Although the County owns this facility, the City has taken the lead in a plan to renovate the building so that it can serve users even more effectively. The building is used for all kinds of special events and activities, including dances, dinners, and musical productions. As part of the million-dollar renovation program, a heating and cooling system will ultimately be provided and the kitchen facilities will be upgraded. Retractable theater-style seating has already been installed in the main hall and improvements have been made to the lobby and the restrooms.

Vintage House: Vintage House is a private, non-profit organization which manages senior-oriented programs out of its facility on First Street East. The City of Sonoma contributed toward the construction of the building and provides the land on which it sits at a rate of one dollar per year.



The Sonoma Community Center, a local non-profit organization, serves as many as 5,000 people each month, with classes in language, music, dance, and the arts, as well as live performances in Andrews Hall.

Youth Center: The City owns and maintains a small building located on Mission Terrace Road which is used by the Boy Scouts and by Valley of the Moon Day Care.

City Parks and Recreation Facilities

The City provides six neighborhood parks, with two others planned for construction in the near future, and two community parks (the Plaza and Depot Park). The City also helps maintain (in conjunction with the School District) the playing fields at Eraldi Park and has constructed tennis courts at the High School. In addition, the City maintains Class 1 bike paths throughout Sonoma and is continually working to expand the bikeway network.

Other Sonoma Valley Recreational Facilities:

County Facilities:

- Arnold Field: One baseball diamond; two Little League baseball diamonds; one football field.
- Ernie Smith Park: One baseball diamond; one soccer field (practice).
- Larson Park: One basket ball court; four tennis courts; one soccer field; one little league baseball diamond.
- Maxwell Farms Regional Park: Two soccer fields; two tennis courts; one basketball court; one volley ball court.

School Facilities:

- Altamira High School: Two basketball courts; two baseball diamonds.
- Dunbar Elementary School: Two basketball courts; two baseball diamonds.
- El Verano Elementary School: Two basketball courts; one baseball diamond; one soccer field.
- Flowery Elementary School: Two basketball courts; two baseball diamonds.
- Prestwood Elementary School: Two basketball courts; three softball diamonds; one soccer field.
- Sassarini Elementary School: Two basketball courts; two baseball diamonds; one soccer field.
- Sonoma Valley High School: Six basketball courts; eight tennis courts; three baseball diamonds; one football field, with track; one outdoor pool; one volleyball court.

State Facilities:

- Sonoma Valley Developmental Center: Three soccer fields; one softball diamond.

Performing Arts Facilities:

- Andrews Hall at the Sonoma Community Center.

- Grinstead Memorial Amphitheater in the Sonoma Plaza.
- John Glaese Theatre located at Sonoma Valley High School.
- Sebastiani Theatre.
- Sonoma Valley Veterans' Memorial Building.



Due to its size and flexibility, the Veterans' Building experiences the highest use of any of the valley's assembly buildings.

Sonoma Valley Recreation Organizations

Baseball:

- Senior Babe Ruth (16 to 18 year-olds, males).
- Sonoma Valley Little League (8 to 12 year-olds, male and female).
- Valley of the Moon Boys and Girls Club (6 to 14 year olds, male and female).
- Valley of the Moon Little League (8 to 12 year-olds, male and female).
- Sonoma Valley Athletic Club (Adults, fast-pitch softball).
- Sonoma Valley Men's Slow-pitch Softball (Adults, slow-pitch softball).
- Sonoma Valley Women's Softball League (Adults, softball).

Soccer:

- Sonoma Valley Youth Soccer Association (6 to 19 year-olds, male and female).
- Sonoma Women's Soccer (Adults).

Tennis:

- Sonoma Valley Tennis Association (10 to 18 year-olds, male and female).
- Sonoma Valley Tennis Association (Adults).

Swimming:

- Sonoma Sea Dragons (5 to 18 year-olds, male and female).
- Sonoma Sea Dragons (Adult program).

For sheer entertainment value, it's hard to beat feeding the ducks in the Plaza.

PARKS

City Parks

Plaza Park: City-owned and maintained. Size: 8.5 acres. Historic park, picnicking, amphitheater, two play areas, duck pond, fish pond, Italian fountain and a rose garden.



Depot Park: City-owned and maintained. Size: 4.6 acres. Historical museum, train cars, volleyball court, horseshoe court, picnicking and children's playground. Connected to a Class 1 bike path.

Olsen Park: City-owned and maintained. Size: 2.0 acres. Picnicking, basketball and a children's playground. Connected to a Class 1 bike path.

Pinelli Park: City-owned and maintained. Size: 0.5 acres. Picnicking and a children's playground.

Eraldi Park: Associated with Sassarini School. Partially city-maintained. Size: 5.6 acres. Soccer, volleyball and softball.

Nathanson Creek Park/Roland Hauk Nature Area: City-owned and maintained. Park size: 0.8 acres; Nature area: 2.0 acres. Picnicking, children's playground and a natural creek area.

Hertenstein Park: City-owned and maintained. Park size: 0.8 acres. Picnicking, children's play area and a winter creek. An important

feature of this park is the Class 1 bikeway connection between the park and the Fryer Creek bike path.

Jean K.T. Carter Park: City-owned and maintained. A neighborhood park was required of the Montclair Park development by the Planning Commission and the City Council as a condition of approval. Park size: 1.0 acres. Vernal pool area: 1.0 acres. Half-court basketball, lawn and picnic areas and play equipment. Because the adjacent vernal pool preserve has been determined by the California Department of Fish and Game to be unsuccessful, it will be modified as a detention basin (a sloped grassy area to hold water during periods of excess rain) serving new development in the area. The park also features a bike path which leads to a bridge crossing to the bike path on the west side of Fryer Creek.

Grinstead Park: This is a small, City-owned property located at the southwest corner of Patten Street and Austin Avenue, which backs onto Nathanson Creek. It is essentially unimproved and contains benches. In the past, the Parks and Recreation Commission has felt it best to leave the property in a natural state. Size: .08 acres.

Bond Property: City owned and maintained. Size: 7 acres. The Bond property is located on Seventh Street East, well outside both city limits and the City's sphere of influence. The property was bequeathed to the City for recreational use, and the City rents out the existing residence on the property. In addition, a new program sponsored by the Ecology Center, the Sonoma Community Agriculture Project, has been authorized by the City to use a portion of the property for a community garden program.

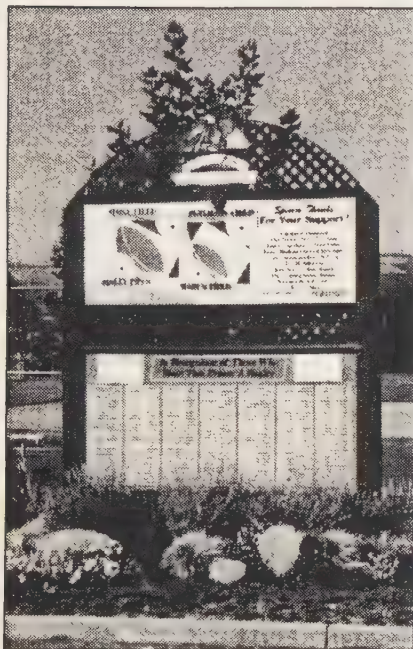
Madera Park (not yet formally named): As part of the recently approved Madera Park subdivision, located off of Leveroni Road, 2.9 acres of open space was set aside, a portion of which has been improved as neighborhood parkland. This area is oriented toward picnicking and passive recreational activities. No play equipment is provided currently, but land is available for that purpose if needed. Other recently completed improvements include the extension of a Class 1 bikepath along the east side of Fryer Creek, with a bridge crossing to the bikepath on the west side of the creek.

Armstrong Park (not yet formally named): This 1.5 acre neighborhood park, which was recently completed as part of the Armstrong Estates subdivision, features lawn, picnic areas with barbeques, benches, and numerous trees and shrubs.

MacArthur Estates Park (not yet formally named): An 0.7 acre neighborhood park has been approved as part of this development, which is located on East MacArthur Street, south of Appleton Way. This park is envisioned as a traditional neighborhood park, with a play area, picnic tables, and a barbeque area.



This scarecrow watches over the Community Farm at the Bond Property.



While the land for the Field of Dreams was provided by the City, the funds for the construction of the playing fields and related improvements were raised through a privately-led community fundraising drive, with participation from virtually all of the valley's youth and recreational providers.

Field of Dreams: Completed in 1994, this seven-acre complex of playing fields is located on City-owned property associated with the Council Chambers/Police Station buildings. The playing fields may be used in several configurations (but not all simultaneously), including a regulation baseball diamond, a regulation softball diamond, two little league diamonds, and two soccer fields. An open turf area provides space for T-ball and other informal games.

Bike Paths: Sonoma has a variety of multi-purpose paths which function as combination bicycle, jogging, par-course and walking trails. The City has Class 1 bike paths in the following locations:

- From Fourth Street East to Sonoma Highway.
- From Third Street West and Arroyo Way to Leveroni Road (along Fryer Creek).
- In Hertenstein Park, connecting to the Fryer Creek path.
- In the Creekwood subdivision located at the end of Oregon and Studley Streets.
- In Carter Park, and extending south to Leveroni Road along Fryer Creek.

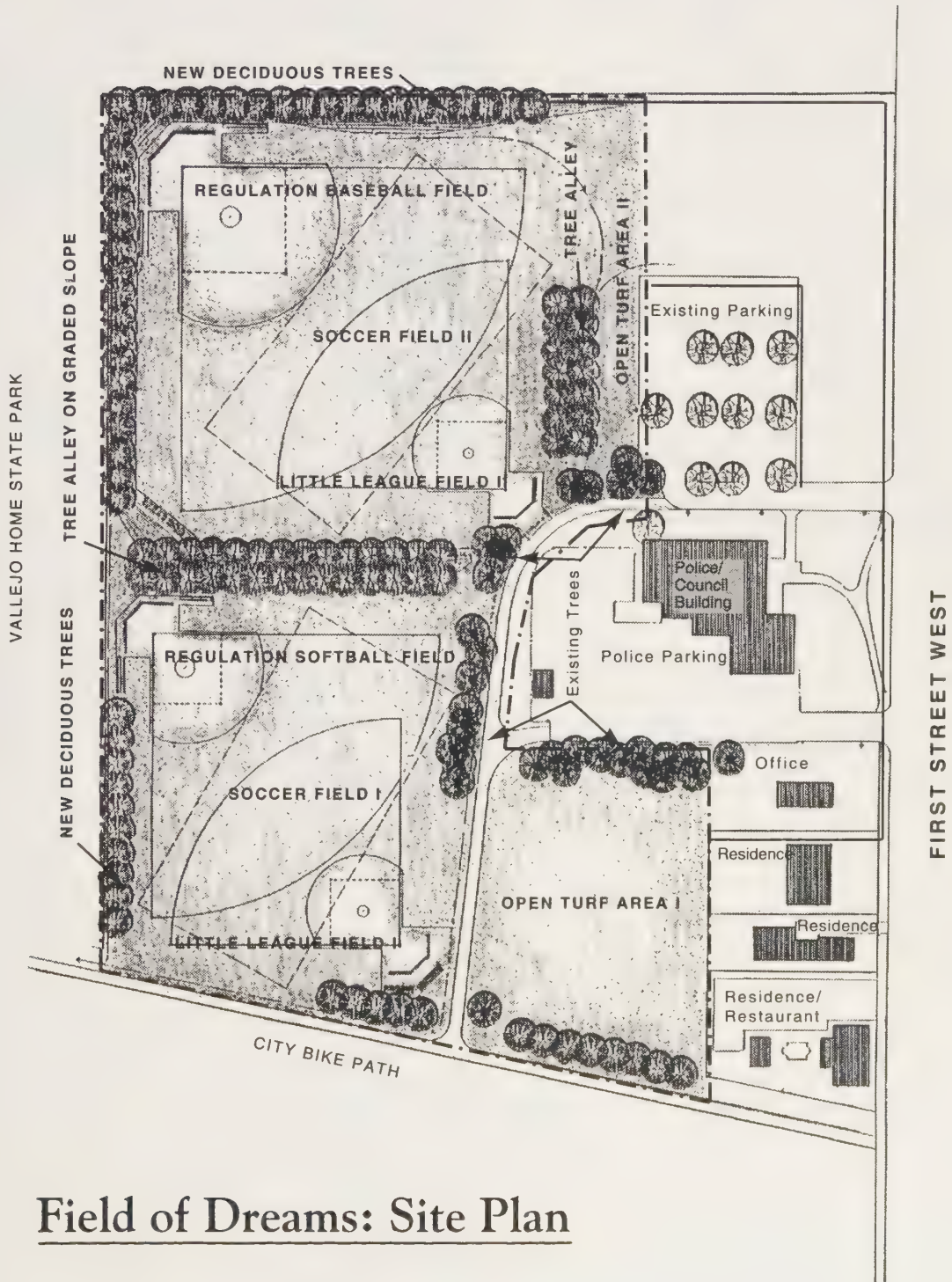
The City has Class 2 bike lanes located along Studley Street, on Dewell Drive near Nathanson Creek Park, and within the Armstrong Estates subdivision. Sonoma County and Caltrans have designated Highway 12 (Broadway, West Napa Street and Sonoma Highway) as a designated touring route. This route is a Class 3 bike facility. Refer to the Bikeway Plan in the Circulation Element for detailed information regarding existing and proposed bike lanes.

County Parks

The County parks in the Sonoma area include Arnold Field, Ernie Smith Park, Larson Park and Maxwell Farms Regional Park. These facilities are owned and maintained by Sonoma County and provide playing fields and courts for individual and group sports.

State Parks



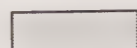







The State parks in the Sonoma area include the Vallejo Home State Park, Barracks State Park and the Sonoma Mission State Park. These parks are owned and operated by the State of California. They preserve important historic buildings and land and provide residents and visitors with information regarding Sonoma's past.

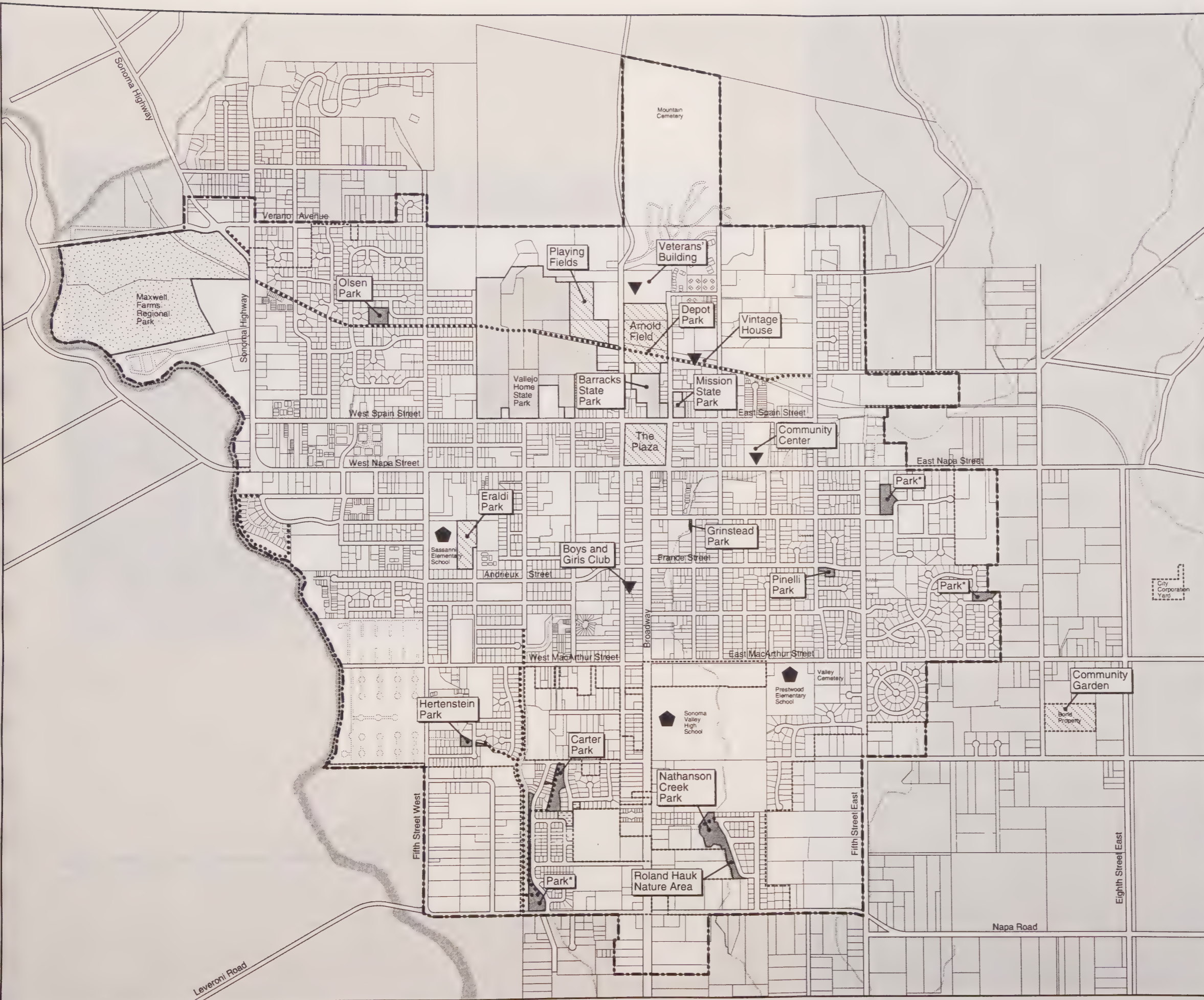


Field of Dreams: Site Plan

1995-2005 General Plan

Parks and Recreation Facilities

-  Regional Parks
-  Community Parks and Playing Fields
-  Historic Parks
-  Neighborhood Parks
-  Vernal Pool Preserves
-  Schools
-  Other Recreational Facilities
-  Class 1 Bike Path
-  City Limit
-  Sphere of Influence



Note: "Park*" denotes an unnamed park as of October, 1995.

City of Sonoma
Community Development Department





Circulation

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan



CIRCULATION

ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

In Sonoma, there are three basic alternatives to the automobile: bus transit, bicycling, and walking. All three modes are addressed in the Circulation Element.

Existing Conditions

Bus Transit: Bus services may be considered in terms of two categories: fixed route bus services and dial-a-ride services. Each service within the two categories is described below.

Fixed Route Service

- 1) Sonoma County Transit provides four routes:
 - Route 30: Sonoma to Santa Rosa (Seven days a week).
 - Routes 32: Sonoma, El Verano, Boyes Hot Springs, and Agua Caliente (Monday through Saturday).
 - Routes 34: Sonoma, El Verano, Boyes Hot Springs, and Agua Caliente (Monday through Friday).
 - Route 40: Sonoma to Petaluma (Monday through Friday).
- 2) Golden Gate Transit provides limited service to and from San Francisco Monday through Friday. The continued operation of this route is uncertain due to funding constraints.
- 3) The Airporter provides service from Sonoma to San Francisco International Airport (seven days a week).
- 4) Greyhound has regular stops in Sonoma, providing service to Sacramento, but this service may be cut back or discontinued.
- 5) Club buses serving San Francisco and Marin have been organized by local commuters through the Golden Gate Transit District.

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 1) Friends In Sonoma Helping (F.I.S.H) operates a volunteer service providing transportation for medical appointments (within Sonoma County and out-of-county), social security appointments, and personal emergencies. Advance notice is preferred.
- 2) Volunteer Wheels provides transportation within Sonoma County for the disabled, including the frail elderly. Whistlestop Wheels in Marin County coordinates with

CIRCULATION

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Volunteer Wheels for service to Marin County and San Francisco. Service is by reservation and fees are charged.

In terms of the circulation system as whole, the fixed-route services are the most important, especially those provided by Sonoma County Transit.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities: The basic elements of the existing system of bikeways are two Class 1 facilities. The first extends east to west from Fourth Street East to the Sonoma Highway, running across the northern half of the city. This facility provides easy access to a number of important destinations, including the Maxwell Village Shopping Center, Olsen Park, the Vallejo Home, Depot Park, and the Plaza area. The second is a recently constructed facility which runs along the west side of Fryer Creek, from Arroyo Way to Leveroni Road, with an extension to Hertenstein Park. In addition to these major Class 1 facilities, there are various Class 2 lanes around the city, but these are presently not linked to any larger system. The city's existing bicycle facilities are shown on the Bicycle Improvement plan in the Circulation Element.

Pedestrians not only use the sidewalks but are accustomed to using the Class 1 facilities as well. With regard to the Class 1 facilities, pedestrians also experience the problems caused by the lack of connections to a larger network. With regard to city sidewalks, many complaints have been raised about gaps in the sidewalk system, especially along heavily traveled roads, where sidewalks are important for pedestrian safety and comfort.

Projected Improvements

Bus Transit: Because transit is a regional service, service improvements will be tied to the growth of the Sonoma Valley as a whole and corresponding increases in demand for transit services. According to the County, if demand and funding allow, Sonoma County Transit services to Sonoma Valley will be increased by reducing headways (the length of time between buses) on Routes 30 and 40. Headways will be reduced incrementally, as demand increases. Golden Gate Transit, which began providing bus service between Sonoma and San Francisco as a pilot program (with funding from both the City and Sonoma County), had upgraded Route 90 to permanent status. However, funding constraints experienced by the district in recent years have threatened the continued operation of this service.

Because City and County policies limit growth in Sonoma and Sonoma Valley, it is likely that bus ridership will increase only incrementally. Yet another factor is the availability of local, state and federal funds for transit development. Just as the trend has been for reduced state and federal participation in highway pro-

grams, funds for transit have also been increasingly scarce. In summary, even taking into account rising fuel prices, there is every reason to expect that the automobile will continue to be the dominant mode of transportation in Sonoma Valley for the duration of the General Plan planning period.

Although the population of Sonoma Valley may be too small and too dispersed to support a substantial mass transit component, the Circulation Element contains policies and implementation measures intended to increase the viability and availability of transit. These programs may be summarized as follows:

- The City will try to continue its transit subsidies while working with the County to increase transit services.
- A compact city form and infill development will be encouraged to promote the provision and use of transit services.
- Covered bus stops will be installed along Highway 12 and other transit corridors.
- The City and County will work together toward the development of a Sonoma Valley transit center.

Taken together, these policies and programs demonstrate a substantial commitment to the provision of transportation alternatives to its citizens.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities: The Circulation Element addresses the current lack of an inter-linked system of bicycle facilities with a Bicycle Plan. The plan has been developed with the view of promoting bicycle use as an alternative to the automobile, rather than as simply a recreational activity. In order to achieve this goal, the plan calls for network of bicycle facilities throughout the city, connected to destination points such as schools, commercial centers, and parks. The Bicycle Improvement plan is supported by a series of policies and implementation programs, including:

- A detailed phasing plan for the provision of public bicycle lanes and facilities throughout the city.
- A requirement for new development to provide bike facilities.
- Mandated annual review of the progress made in implementing the Bicycle Improvement plan.
- Expansion of the City's bicycle education programs.
- Funding for bicycle improvements through a share of the Circulation Impact Fee applied to new development.

In order to give full attention to the special needs of pedestrians and the opportunities to encourage walking afforded by Sonoma's human scale, the Circulation Element provides a set of policies and implementation programs aimed exclusively at promoting walking and providing pedestrian amenities. These policies and programs include:

- The promotion of a compact development pattern and mixed-use projects.
- The development of a program to improve pedestrian amenities in commercial areas and along pedestrian routes.
- Including consideration of pedestrian concerns in the review of projects by the Planning Commission.
- The construction of appropriately-sized sidewalks along streets where gaps in the sidewalk system exist.
- The development of a Pathway Plan to serve as the basis for implementing pedestrian improvements.

In addition, the policies and programs of the Pedestrian Section of the Circulation Element call for the development of guidelines for the provision of wide sidewalks, landscaping, and other amenities along Highway 12 as improvements to the roadway occur. Finally, pedestrians will benefit from Class 1 bicycle facilities developed through the implementation of the Bicycle Improvement plan.

ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA

An identification of the need for circulation improvements was developed by comparing roadway and intersection operation, under both existing conditions and traffic projections for the year 2005 (based on development associated with the Land Use Plan), to specified levels of service. In essence, traffic volumes were compared to available capacity. When current volumes or projected traffic increases cause operating conditions to fall to levels poorer than the specified criteria, circulation improvements are proposed to bring traffic conditions to an acceptable level. Traffic conditions are evaluated in terms of the weekday p.m. peak period (the time of maximum traffic flow during normal conditions). Three improvement criteria are used, one for mid-block operation, one for intersection operation and one for signalization needs.

The first two criteria, used to determine the need for road widenings and intersection improvements, relate to capacity. When traffic volumes approach or exceed the capacity of a road segment or intersection, the level of service declines. Proposed improvements maintain traffic conditions at acceptable levels by increasing capaci-

ty to meet increases in volume. Occasionally, road widenings or intersection improvements are suggested for safety reasons. Such occurrences are identified. The third standard, used to identify the need for intersection signalization, is a signal warrant criteria that evaluates signal need on the basis of peak hour volume through the intersection.

Roadway Level of Service

Although intersections largely determine circulation system capacity, acceptable mid-block operation is important for driver comfort and safety. Mid-block conditions are commonly evaluated by a level of service scale that measures operation or available capacity by six levels of service (LOS)—A through F, with A designating the best level of operation and the greatest capacity for additional traffic and F the poorest level, with volumes actually in excess of theoretical capacity (see the table below).

**Level of Service Definitions for
Roadway and Intersection Operation**

Level of Service	Operating Conditions	V/C Ratio
A	Relatively free flow. No restrictions in vehicle maneuverability. Very slight delays.	0.00-0.60
B	Stable flow. Some reduction in maneuverability and speed. Vehicle platoons form. Slight delays.	0.61-0.70
C	Stable flow or operation. Higher volumes. Increasing restrictions on maneuverability and speed. Acceptable delays.	0.71-0.80
D	Approaching unstable flow or operation. Queues begin to form. Limited freedom to maneuver. Tolerable delays for short periods.	0.81-0.90
E	Unstable flow or operation. Low operating speed with momentary stoppages. Congested conditions causing unacceptable driver delays.	0.91-1.00
F	Forced flow or operation with many prolonged stoppages.	1.00+

Source: *Highway Capacity Manual*

Table 33

In identifying the need for road widenings, the Planning Commission and City Council set level of service D as the poorest acceptable mid-block operating condition during the weekday p.m. peak traffic hour. Although it is in the middle of the scale, level D is considered an acceptable level of service. The City Council

specifically excepted the segment of West Napa Street between Fifth Street West and Riverside Drive. Along this segment, LOS E has been determined to be acceptable in order to defer or avoid the need for road widenings in the area.

Intersection Volume/Capacity Ratio

Intersections are usually the capacity-controlling locations of any circulation system. Intersection operation is normally measured through the use of the Volume/Capacity ratio. The Volume/Capacity (V/C) ratio evaluates intersection operation by comparing the maximum sum of through movements versus opposing left turns to the theoretical capacity of the intersection. As the ratio approaches theoretical capacity (1.0), intersection operation worsens. Operational levels are graded according to a three level scale. Intersections with a ratio of .85 or less are considered as operating below capacity, those with a ratio of .86 to 1.0 are considered to be nearing capacity, and those with a ratio greater than 1.0 are above capacity.

Intersection operation was formerly rated according to a six level scale analogous to that used to measure mid-block operation. In recent years, the A-F scale has been replaced by the more flexible three level rating system. Table 33 describes V/C ratios and compares the resultant operating condition to the old A-F scale. In accordance with standard usage, the Planning Commission and City Council established a V/C ratio of .85 as the poorest acceptable level of intersection operation during weekday peak hour traffic conditions as a means of identifying the potential need for intersection improvements.

The .85 ratio provides an acceptable level of service, yet makes the most of an intersection's existing capacity. For those intersections where the ratio is projected to be exceeded, improvements designed to achieve the desired level of service were developed. As with the proposed road widenings, the initially recommended intersection improvements were carefully evaluated to ensure their compatibility with the visual and historical character of Sonoma. As a result of this process, some of the proposed improvements were modified or deleted.

Signalization Warrant Criteria

The traffic model's volume projections were used to estimate the need for new signals on the basis of a single warrant, the warrant for peak hour volume. This method is more general than the capacity criteria used to determine the need for mid-block or intersection improvements, because two signal warrants must usually be met before a signal is called for, and there are many other signal warrants that might potentially be met in addition to that test-

ed with the model output. The model's volume projections give a rough idea of the need for new signals. However, merely because a given intersection is projected to meet the warrant tested for does not mean that signalization is inevitable. The signalization of any intersection in Sonoma is ultimately decided by the City Council.

New Signals

Currently there are seven signals within city limits: At the intersections of Sonoma Highway/Maxwell Village, Sonoma Highway/West Spain Street, and Sonoma Highway West Napa Street; at the intersections of West Napa Street/Second Street West and West Napa Street/Fifth Street West; and, at the intersections of Broadway/MacArthur Street and Broadway/Napa-Leveroni Roads. Immediately outside city limits there are signals at the intersection of Verano Avenue and the Sonoma Highway and at the intersection of Fifth Street West/Leveroni Road. Intersections at which new signals may be required are shown on the Circulation Improvement plan in the Circulation Element.

ROAD MAINTENANCE

There are about 25 miles of dedicated public streets within the city of Sonoma. Day-to-day maintenance work on the system is performed by a four-person street crew. Larger projects are bid out to private companies. Road maintenance generally consists of filling potholes and installing street seals and overlays. Roadbed reconstruction is rarely necessary, especially when an active maintenance program is in place. Current maintenance needs are identified and met through the City's five year capital improvement program, a continually updated program of planning, budgeting, and implementing capital projects. Street maintenance is only one part of the program. Until now, the City has had little difficulty in maintaining its streets, but with the vagaries of funding sources and the aging of the street system, meeting future needs may be more of a challenge. The road extensions and new roads called for to serve buildout of the General Plan could add up to 3.2 miles to the existing street network. Interior streets necessary to serve particular subdivisions would further extend the system.

THE PLAZA AREA

For the purposes of the Circulation Element, the Plaza area may be roughly delineated by a one block radius around the central square. This area is the core of historic Sonoma. Its functional significance as the town's commercial center has been somewhat diluted by the development of shopping centers to the west, as well as its increasing reliance upon and orientation toward visitor spending.

Traffic congestion in the Plaza area results from both its uses and its location. The Plaza area contains a variety of uses, including shops, offices, parks, and both single-family and multi-family housing. Individually and in combination, these uses generate substantial traffic volumes. The commercial uses attract not only residents of Sonoma and Sonoma Valley, but also, in conjunction with the Plaza, the State Parks, and Sonoma Valley wineries, including the Sebastiani Winery just three blocks from the square, a considerable amount of visitor traffic. Finally, the Plaza area's central location, at the intersection of Broadway and West Napa Street, the major north/south and east/west travel corridors, subjects it to both local trips and commuter traffic.

Circulation

The Plaza lies at the center of Sonoma's historic street network, with the grid pattern extending outward from it. The streets forming the square are Napa Street, Spain Street, First Street East and First Street West. The central street system is completed by Broadway, which terminates on Napa Street in a "T" intersection. Immediately adjacent to the Plaza, Spain Street and First Streets East and West are two lane roads with 60 degree angled parking on both sides. This parking pattern continues on Napa Street, except where it is broken on the northwest side for an exclusive right turn onto First Street West. Broadway has four lanes at its intersection with Napa Street, with parallel parking on both sides of the street. All of these intersections, except Napa Street and First Street West, are controlled by stop signs.

Although the pattern of flow is dominated by Broadway and West Napa Street, in conformance with the routing of Highway 12, there are substantial volumes along every segment of the square. Congestion in the area is not simply the result of the large traffic volumes, but also arises from a number of other circumstances:

- The roads serve a variety of functions-accommodating local, commuter, through and visitor traffic.
- The shortage of parking in the area forces cars to circle the Plaza while hunting for parking.
- Vehicles entering and exiting the on-street parking spaces interrupt the flow of traffic.
- Delivery trucks must often double-park because of the lack of rear access to many Plaza businesses.
- The large numbers of pedestrians in the area conflict with efficient intersection use. Jaywalkers also interrupt traffic flow.

- Because of the existing pattern of development, significant improvements to roadway and intersection capacity cannot be accomplished without removing valuable on-street parking.

Traffic congestion in the downtown area is a source of frustration to the townspeople. In surveys of residents and business owners conducted in August, 1987, (as part of a tourism study) the two groups strongly agreed with the planning objective of reducing congestion in the Plaza area. The survey of residents also indicated that Sonomans often avoid the Plaza because of traffic congestion, particularly on weekends.

Parking

There is a substantial parking shortage in the Plaza area. This deficiency in turn contributes to circulation problems, as drivers mill about trying to find parking spaces and slow down other traffic. According to a study conducted in 1982, there are approximately 441 on-street parking spaces in the vicinity of the Plaza, with about 283 of those on streets directly adjacent to the central square. The study also identified approximately 786 off-street spaces (paved and unpaved), but many of these are not directly associated with the Plaza proper. A use survey conducted as part of the study found that only about 1% of the on-street spaces directly adjacent to the Plaza were vacant during the peak period of parking demand (12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.) and only 3.2% during off peak hours (10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.). Off-street parking usage was not surveyed, but was estimated to be comparatively low, because much of the potential parking consists of unsigned, unpaved areas, known and used primarily by employees.

The availability of parking in the Plaza area has long been a concern of Sonomans, as demonstrated by a comprehensive study of Plaza parking conducted in 1953, and it remains a concern, as evidenced by the 1982 parking study. Past actions to address the problem have included revisions to the parking provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, the establishment of two hour parking zones around the Plaza, and the implementation of an upgraded sign program directing drivers to the main off-street parking lot (the State-owned, City-leased Casa Grande lot, located behind the barracks building off of First Street East). In addition, the City has substantially improved the Casa Grande parking lot, increasing the number of parking spaces, creating areas for tour bus and R.V. parking, improving access to the facility, and providing off-street access for delivery vehicles serving Spain Street businesses.

One perennially proposed approach to the problem has been the formation of a downtown parking district. Such a district would provide a funding mechanism for the acquisition and development of off-street parking, as well as the planning and implementation of

Potential parking opportunities in the downtown area.

other potential improvements. Previous attempts to form a downtown parking district have failed for a variety of reasons, but it now appears that the necessary consensus among the Plaza business community and the City government may be achieved. There is growing recognition that a parking district may be the only effective means of keeping pace with the demand for downtown parking.



The shaded areas identified in an overview of potential downtown parking sites, shown on the map above, are derived from a parking study conducted in 1986 (with the exception of area 6, which has already developed with parking). The estimated parking potential for each area is taken from this earlier study.

1. This privately owned property is 1.4 acres in size and is currently vacant. In the 1986 parking study, it was estimated that the property could accommodate approximately 45 spaces. Its location provides good access from First Street West and the Casa Grande Lot.

2. The State-owned Casa Grande Lot has been developed with off-street public parking in a project funded by the City's Community Development Agency. The City's lease of the property expires in 1995. Of the undeveloped area of the site, one portion is an archaeological site while another has recently been approved as a community garden site.
3. This privately owned parcel has been the subject of much study with regard to its potential development with off-street parking. In the 1986 study, it was estimated that the site could accommodate 80 spaces. An easement along the property now serves the Mercato parking lot.
4. A significant portion of these privately owned properties (indicated by the hash-marks) has been developed with a parking lot serving the Mercato and Mercato II buildings.
5. This 0.75 acre area was estimated as capable of accommodating 68 parking spaces. However, these properties are the site of the final phase of Sonoma Courts Shops, a commercial development approved in 1989.
6. This area has already been developed with various parking lots serving several different buildings. These lots, although contiguous, are not connected. It has been suggested that by connecting the lots, additional parking could be created.
7. Located behind the Masonic Lodge, this 0.5 acre area is already used as employee parking for various businesses, although it is neither paved nor striped. The properties comprising this area are privately owned.
8. This 0.45 acre area, located north of the Sonoma Hotel, has a potential for 40 parking spaces, according to the 1986 study. These properties, which are privately owned, suffer from poor access and visibility and are directly adjacent to numerous residences.



The Casa Grande Lot

The Casa Grande Parking Lot, located behind the Barracks off of First Street East, provides much-needed parking for the downtown. While at times it may be underutilized, on weekends and during special events it fills up quickly.

Responses

Some of these problems, such as the shortage of off-street parking, are at least potentially solvable. Others, such as vehicle/pedestrian conflicts, are a natural consequence of how the Plaza is used and enjoyed. These can be mitigated, but are not easily resolved. Still others raise the question of whether a proposed solution, such as a road widening, might not create its own difficulties, such as the removal of on-street parking. Finally, it is possible that certain intersection improvements may conflict with the character of the Plaza, both in terms of its historic flavor and its pedestrian orientation. The Circulation Element attempts to provide sensitive, con-

structive responses to the unique problems presented by the Plaza area:

- The City will investigate the formation of a downtown parking district to address the shortage of parking in the area. The possibility of developing off-street parking outside of the immediate vicinity of the Plaza will also be evaluated.
- The feasibility of a jitney service, perhaps linking with off-street parking outside of the Plaza area, will be investigated.
- Improvements to the bicycle and pedestrian systems in the Plaza area will increase its attractiveness and help reduce reliance on auto use and related parking demand.

With regard to the Plaza, the basic intent of the Circulation Element is to provide a balanced response to the demands created by existing and future traffic and the necessity of preserving the character of the area.



Public Safety

*City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan*



PUBLIC SAFETY

INTRODUCTION

Supplementing the Public Safety Element of the General Plan, this portion of the technical appendix provides additional information on hazards facing Sonoma and the Planning Area. These hazards include earthquakes and other geological events, urban and wild-land fires, hazardous materials, and flooding.

SEISMIC AND OTHER GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

Setting

The City of Sonoma Planning Area is located in southern Sonoma Valley where the valley begins to fan open, forming a delta draining into San Pablo Bay. Sonoma is on the eastern edge of the valley floor, next to the hills separating Sonoma and Napa Counties. Topographically, the Planning Area is generally flat, with slopes in excess of 15% found only in a small portion in the northeast (Shocken Hill and surrounding areas). Alluvial deposits consisting of sorted silt, sand and coarse gravel laid down during the Quaternary Period form the superficial geology of the Planning Area. The alluvial layer is up to 300 feet thick in places, with ground water generally shallower than 20 feet.

Seismic Hazards: Historical and Potential

Since 1855, more than 150 earthquakes have been felt in Sonoma County; however, only three caused serious, widespread damage. The south Sonoma Valley area suffered significant damage only in the earthquakes of 1891 and 1906. In the 1891 earthquake, nearly every house in Sonoma Valley was damaged to some extent, and many chimneys fell. In 1906, Santa Rosa and other west-county cities were devastated, but the City of Sonoma escaped serious damage. Although most of the chimneys in the area collapsed, masonry buildings were either undamaged or only slightly damaged. Even adobe structures escaped relatively unscathed.

The lack of serious damage to the city in the past is not a reliable indicator of the effects of future earthquakes. Currently available data indicate that a potentially damaging earthquake may occur somewhere within the Santa Rosa Sheet (an area encompassing all of Sonoma and Napa Counties as well as portions of five other counties) on an average of once every 20 to 30 years. The last major earthquake centered in the north bay area was the Santa Rosa earthquake of 1969.

Potentially Hazardous Faults

No known active or potentially active faults traverse the Planning Area and no portion of the area is located within an Alquist-Priolo

Earthquake Fault Map

A schematic map of earthquake faults in the Bay Area is provided on page 205.

Special Studies Zone. However, there are seven active or potentially active faults in Sonoma County, any of which could affect the City of Sonoma. Activity along the Carneros Fault in Napa County could also affect Sonoma. The most significant faults in relation to the city are the the Rogers Creek Fault (an extension of the Hayward Fault), the San Andreas Fault and the Tolay Fault. The Rogers Creek and Tolay faults are located approximately 3.5 and 6.5 miles west of the city, respectively, and pass through the Sonoma Mountains west of Sonoma. The San Andreas Fault is located approximately 30 miles west of the city at its closest point. Estimates of the 30-year probability of a major earthquake occurring along various fault segments are provided in the table below, along with the characteristic "moment magnitude associated with each fault segment. (Similar to the Richter Scale, "moment magnitude" is a measure of the energy released by an earthquake, in proportion to the area of fault surface which has slipped.)

Overall, the 30-year probability of a major earthquake occurring in the Bay Area is estimated at 67%.

**30-Year Probabilities for Large Earthquakes on
Various Fault Segments**

<u>Fault Segment</u>	<u>30-Year Probability</u>	<u>Characteristic Magnitude</u>
Healdsburg/Rogers Creek	22%	7.1
Hayward		
Northern Segment	28%	7.1
Southern Segment	23%	7.1
San Andreas		
North Coast Segment	2%	8.0
San Francisco Segment	23%	7.1

Source: "On Shaky Ground," Association of Bay Area Governments, 1995.

Table 34

Hazards

Seismic hazards are of two types: primary and secondary. Primary hazards result directly from the earthquake and include surface rupture, groundshaking, and tsunamis. Secondary hazards result from the conjunction of groundshaking with existing geologic instabilities and include earthquake induced liquefaction and landslides. The city is subject to neither surface rupture, nor tsunamis; the others, however, are potential hazards.

Groundshaking and liquifaction are the most widespread effects of an earthquake and, in conjunction with structural failure, the most destructive. Groundshaking is more intense in alluvial areas such as Sonoma, with intensity increasing proportionately to the thickness of the alluvium. With regard to liquifaction, most of the soils underlying the Planning Area have a moderate to high potential for liquifaction due to their alluvial origin.

Because most earthquake caused deaths result from structural failures, it is appropriate to focus on potential seismic effects on structures. Groundshaking causes most structural failures. The response of a structure to an earthquake depends on the type, design and construction of the structure, as well as its location in relation to the earthquake.

Among the most vulnerable, non-occupied structures within the Planning Area are roads, power lines, and water lines, as failure along any point can disrupt the entire system. Water tanks within the Planning Area pose little hazard due to their recent construction and distance from developed areas. However, the disruption of water, sewer, power, and gas lines can pose major fire and health risks depending on the nature and duration of the damage.

The potential effects of seismic activity on occupied buildings are best considered by grouping buildings among four types: critical/emergency buildings, high priority buildings, high use buildings, and smaller residences.

Critical/emergency buildings are those essential for responding to emergency situations. Buildings in this category include:

- *Fire Station:* Built in 1948, this building was thoroughly remodeled in 1982 and is in conformance with all applicable seismic safety standards.
- *Police Department/Council Chambers:* Completed in 1981, this structure fully complies with current seismic safety standards.
- *Sonoma Valley Hospital:* The original structure was built in the 1950's, but has since been expanded and remodeled. In 1981, the facility was further expanded and the entire building strengthened to comply with seismic safety standards. The oldest "core" area of the complex does not, however, comply with state seismic standards applicable to hospitals. This portion of the complex will either have to be further strengthened or replaced.
- *City Hall:* Built in 1908, this historic, stone and mortar structure was seismically upgraded in 1987.

High priority buildings are those which should be designed or retrofitted to survive an earthquake due to the nature of their occupancy, their importance to social coherence, or their desirability as emergency meeting places. Buildings in this category include:

- *Public Schools:* Prestwood and Sassarini Elementary Schools and Sonoma Valley High School are all located within city limits. All were built since 1952, except for the main building of the high school which has been reinforced in compliance with the Field Act, and all are considered earthquake safe.
- *Convalescent Hospitals:* The convalescent hospitals and rest homes within the Planning Area are single story structures of recent construction and therefore have moderate to high earthquake resistance.
- *Theaters:* The Sebastiani Theater, located across from the Plaza, was built in the 1930's. After conducting an assessment of its design, it was determined that the URM ordinance did not apply to the building because it has a steel-reinforced structure.
- *Community Center:* A former school, this originally unreinforced brick and concrete structure now houses a variety of community groups. The seismic renovation of this structure was completed in 1989.
- *Sonoma Valley County Library:* Constructed in 1977-78, this building is considered earthquake safe.
- *Post Office and the Veterans' Memorial Building:* These two single-story buildings, built since 1952, are considered only minimally susceptible to earthquake damage.

High-use buildings are important due to the intensity of their use. Included in this category are commercial buildings, large apartment buildings, and churches. Sonoma's tallest buildings in this group—many of them commercial buildings in the Plaza area—are not more than three stories tall. Because of their age, the historic buildings around the Plaza are probably the most vulnerable to earthquake damage, especially those of adobe construction. (Many of these buildings are subject to the seismic retrofit requirements of the City's unreinforced masonry building ordinance, as discussed below.) The other buildings in this group, because of their relatively small size and more recent construction, are not especially prone to earthquake damage.

Pursuant to state law, the City adopted an "unreinforced masonry building ordinance" in 1990. This ordinance established a process for identifying unreinforced masonry buildings, which due to the

nature of their construction are especially vulnerable to earthquake damage, and set forth a time-table for the development and implementation of seismic upgrading plans. Since the inception of the program, 54 unreinforced masonry buildings were identified, of which 18 have been renovated (four more buildings have begun the upgrade process). The remainder are scheduled for upgrading over the next 10 years.

For the most part, the designs for the seismic rehabilitation of historically-significant structures have been developed in accordance with the provisions of the State Historic Building Code in order to minimize the impact on the historic qualities these building possess. This results in a level of retrofit which protects building users but which does not preclude serious structural damage in the event of a major earthquake. The requirement for seismic upgrading is usually accompanied by a requirement for the installation of fire sprinkler systems, which further enhances the safety of these buildings.



As it developed the Unreinforced Masonry Building Ordinance, the City Council took care to provide incentives as well as mandates. The seismic renovations of the Swiss Hotel and the Sebastiani Apartment building, shown in the foreground, are a testament to the success of the ordinance as a tool for historic preservation.

Small Residential Structures, include single family homes, duplexes, and small apartments are typically one and two story structures, usually of wood frame construction. These relatively small buildings, especially those of more recent construction, are resistant to earthquakes. The primary dangers are from collapsing chimneys and from fires. The most vulnerable buildings in this category are mobile homes, which are prone to falling from their foundations when exposed to intense groundshaking unless fitted with foundation restraints.

URBAN AND WILDLAND FIRES

Setting

Three fire districts operate within the Planning Area: fire protection within city limits is the responsibility of the City of Sonoma Fire Department; north of city limits, fire services are provided by the Valley of the Moon Fire District; elsewhere in the unincorporated portion of the Planning Area, fire protection is the responsibility of the Schell-Vista Fire District. All three services belong to a county-wide mutual aid agreement.

The City maintains a full time staff of fifteen fire-fighters and a volunteer force of twenty-five. The all-volunteer Schell-Vista force numbers thirty-five. On the Fire Insurance Rating Scale (a one to ten scale with one the most desirable rating, and ten the least desirable) the city has a rating of four, and according to the Schell-Vista Fire Chief, the Schell-Vista District has a rating of seven for residential structures.

Encompassing approximately 2.1 square miles, the city is the most urbanized portion of the of the Planning Area. The much larger unincorporated area encompasses three distinct geographic areas: hillsides to the north, east, and west; a strip of industrial uses, east of the city along Eighth Street East; lastly, farms, scattered rural housing and open space make up the remainder—and the bulk—of the Planning Area. The risk of structural fires, while present throughout the Planning Area, is concentrated in two locations: within the city, the Plaza area poses the greatest hazard; within the unincorporated portion, the primary hazard is the industrial strip along Eighth Street East.

Within the City

In general, the risk of a major fire occurring within the City is low to moderate. Sonoma has good fire hydrant coverage and generally good emergency access. Due to the trend toward narrow, privately maintained streets, it is the newer subdivisions which tend to pose access problems. Sonoma employs Fire Safety and Weed Abatement Ordinances and the Fire Department implements an ongoing building inspection program. The main fire protection problem is presented by the Plaza area. Generally of wood frame construction, many of the closely packed historic buildings around the Plaza lack sprinklers.

Within the Unincorporated Area

Lacking in water, the unincorporated area has few fire hydrants. Emergency vehicle access is generally good, although some roads in the area are narrow and poorly maintained and access to the

hills is quite limited. Due to the size of the area and the all-volunteer nature of the Schell-Vista Fire Department, first vehicle response time is usually from seven to fifteen minutes.

The main concentration of buildings in the area—and the main structural fire hazard—is the industrial strip along Eighth Street East. The lack of water, the industrial activity and the relatively high density all contribute to the hazard. Currently, the risk of fire is mitigated by the usually wide building setbacks and the presence of a fire sub-station located on the north end of Eighth Street East.

Wildfires

Within the Planning Area, the risk of wildfires is largely confined to the unincorporated portion. Because there are only a few large parcels of agricultural and open land within city limits and because a Weed Abatement Ordinance is employed, the likelihood of a wildfire starting within the city is small; however, the city could be threatened by a wildfire started outside of city limits.

The hillsides within the unincorporated area have the greatest wildfire potential. Thick vegetation, limited access and steep slopes make fire suppression difficult. This area is classified as “moderate” to “high” on the Fire Hazard Severity Scale. The remainder of the unincorporated area is comprised mainly of farms and scattered houses. As this area is mostly flat, lightly vegetated and often irrigated, it is not prone to wildfires.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Setting

A hazardous material is any inherently “injurious substance, including pesticides, herbicides, toxic metals and chemicals, liquefied natural gas, explosives, volatile chemicals and nuclear fuels” (California General Plan Guidelines, 1982). Within the city, controlling spills, leaks, fires and other emergencies involving hazardous materials is the responsibility of the City of Sonoma Fire Department; within the unincorporated portion of the Planning Area, such incidents are the responsibility of the California Highway Patrol and the Sonoma County Sheriff’s Office. In the event of a major incident requiring additional or specialized help, a special force exists to respond to accidents involving hazardous materials. Maintained jointly by Sonoma County and incorporated cities of Sonoma County (except for the city of Santa Rosa), the unit is based in Santa Rosa and would take approximately thirty minutes to respond to an accident in the Planning Area.

Regarding the possibility of a major accident or fire involving hazardous materials, several areas of concern exist within the

Planning Area: chemical transports on Highway 12, industrial uses along Eighth Street East, farms, chemical use associated with water and sewer treatment, and illegal drug manufacturing.

Within the City

The city is the area of greatest hazard simply because more people would be liable to exposure. Highway 12 is an area of particular concern. However, because the city is composed mainly of residential and retail commercial uses and because Highway 12 is a relatively minor transportation route, a major accident involving hazardous material is unlikely.

Within the Unincorporated Area

The Eighth Street East area, with its mixed collection of industrial uses, may be the most likely to suffer an accident involving hazardous materials. The danger of such an occurrence is compounded by the lack of water for fire suppression. However, the present types of activities in the area—mainly warehousing, wholesaling, and other light industrial uses—require and generate only low to moderate amounts of hazardous materials. Agricultural operations normally use hazardous materials, most notably pesticides and herbicides. However, since the farms in the area are relatively small and often of low intensity, the likelihood of a major accident involving hazardous materials is quite small.

FLOODING

Setting

The Planning Area has two separate flood control jurisdictions. Within the city, flood control is the responsibility of the City of Sonoma Public Works Department. Within the unincorporated area, flood control is the responsibility of the Sonoma County water Agency. Although the Planning area is relatively flat and is crisscrossed with streams, flooding poses no threat to life, and only localized threats to property (see the Flood Plain Area map, page 206).

Within the City

Flooding within the city largely stems from the two major streams passing through city limits, Nathanson Creek and Fryer Creek. The two are roughly parallel, flowing from north to south, with Nathanson Creek on the east side of the city and Fryer Creek on the west.

The smaller of the two is Fryer Creek. Its 100-year flood plain is both narrow and shallow. The most extreme flooding of the creek

produces only nuisance street flooding (impeding, but not stopping traffic). Many of the flooding problems formerly caused by Fryer Creek have been corrected through storm drain improvements made over the last five years.

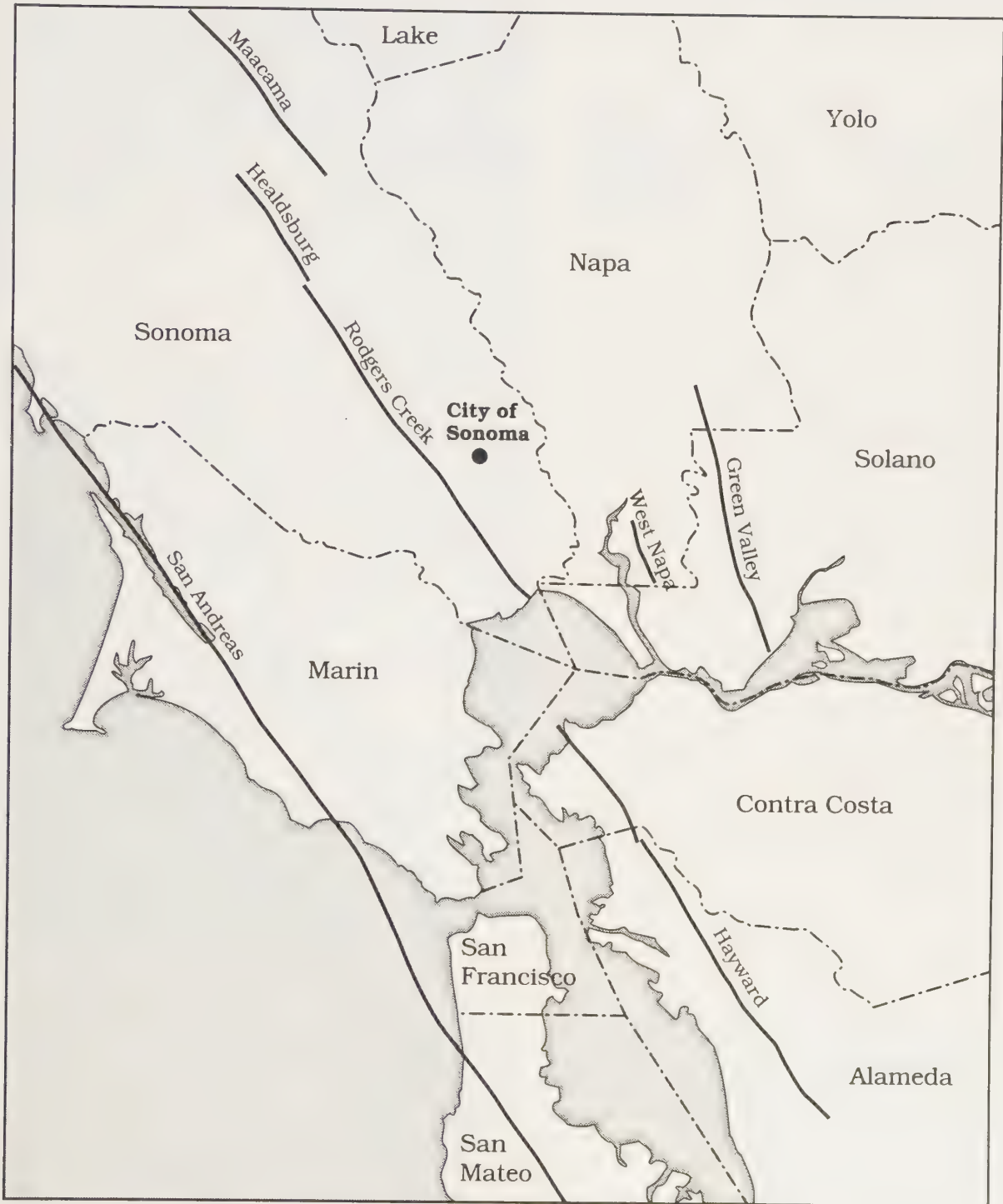
Nathanson Creek is larger and causes greater problems. Its 100-year flood plain is also fairly narrow within the city, but flooding of the creek can cause nuisance street flooding, as well as threaten minor interior flooding in a few houses. Efforts to control flooding within the city focus on ongoing maintenance and improvements to the storm drain system and floodways, and on restrictions on flood plain development.

Within the Unincorporated Area

Outside of city limits to the south, the flood plains broaden and merge. Fryer and Nathanson Creeks are joined by Sonoma, Rodgers and Fowler Creeks. The area encompassed by the 100-year flood plains is largely in agricultural and low density rural uses. Although the flood plains are broad, they are also relatively shallow, usually no more than three feet deep. Flooding outside of city limits causes nuisance street flooding and can threaten some houses with minor interior flooding.

Maintaining floodways and restricting flood plain development are the primary means of flood control in the unincorporated area.







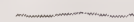


Earthquake Faults in the Bay Area

Source: Division of Mines and Geology



Not to Scale

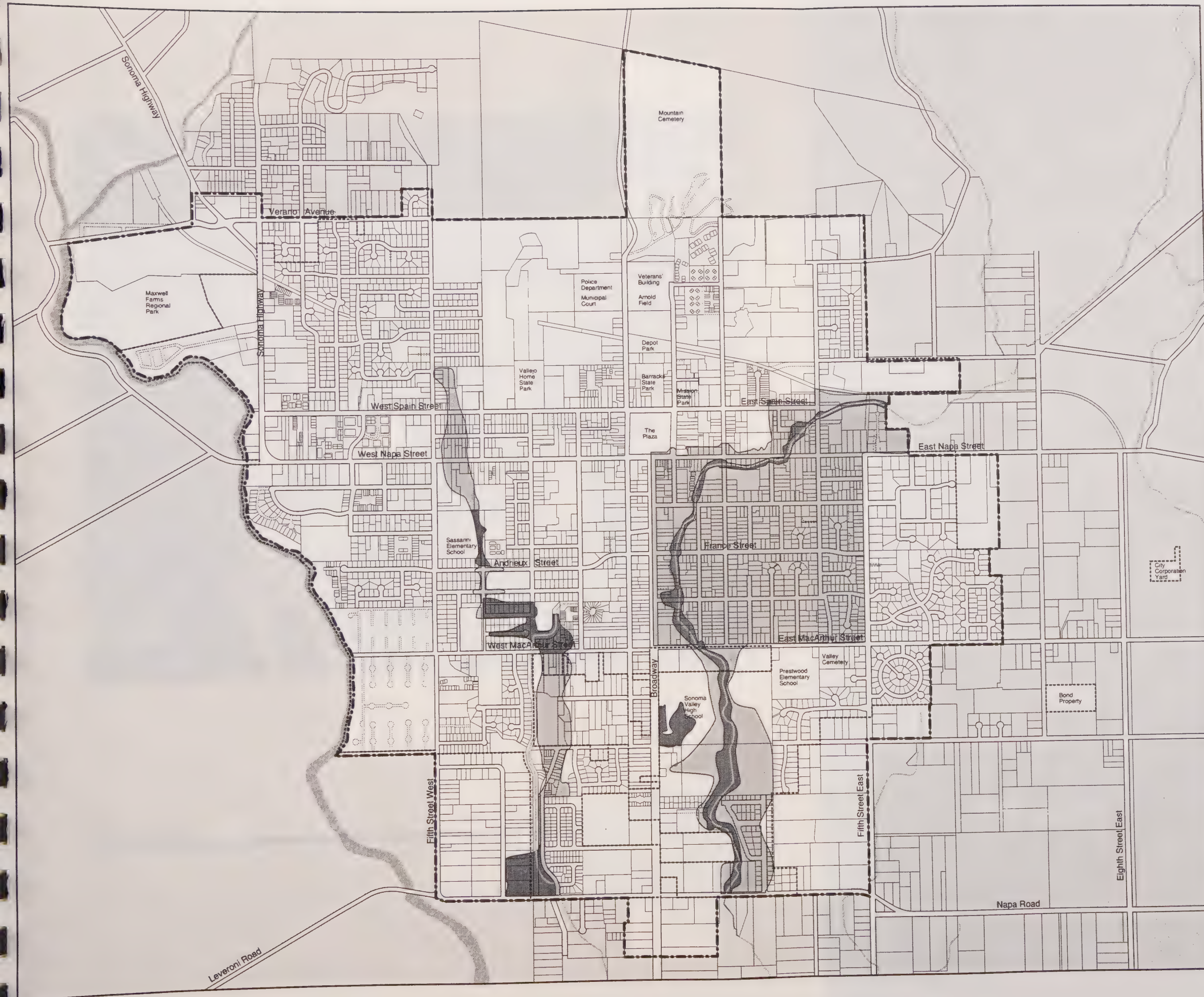
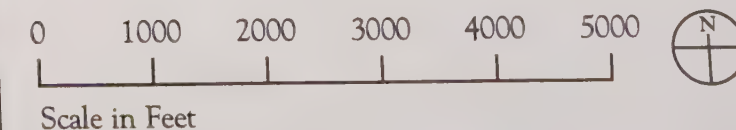
1995-2005 General Plan Flood Plain Areas

-  100-Year Flood Boundary
-  500-Year Flood Boundary*
-  Creek Channel
-  City Limit
-  Sphere of Influence

*Certain areas are subject to 100-year flooding with average depths of less than one foot.

Note: Flood boundaries are derived from 1979 Federal Flood Insurance Rate Map (Panel No. 060383 0001 C) and Federal Emergency Management Agency preliminary revision (1994). Locations approximate.

City of Sonoma
Community Development Department





Noise

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan



NOISE

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are used in both the Noise Element and this supplementary section to describe various noise levels and conditions:

Decibel (dB): A unit describing the amplitude of sound, equal to 20 times the logarithm to the base 10 of the ratio of the pressure of the sound pressure.

A-weighted Sound Level (dBA): This is the most common unit of measurement of sound levels. dB stands for decibel; “A” indicates that the noise signal is electronically processed to mimic the response of the human ear. A change in decibel level is roughly equivalent to a change in perceived loudness. A 3 dBA increase in sound level is barely noticeable to the human ear; however, a 10 dBA increase is generally perceived as a doubling of loudness.

Equivalent Noise Level (Leq): This is a type of average sound level, measured in dBA. It is the level of a fictitious, steady state sound which would deliver the same acoustic energy during a given period of time as a time-varying, measured sound actually does deliver during the same period.

Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL): The average A-weighted noise level during a 24-hour day, obtained after the addition of 5 decibels in the evening from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and after the addition of 10 decibels to levels measured in the night between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

Day/Night Noise Level (Ldn): This measure represents the annual day/night sound level (in dBA). It is the average sound level (Leq) over one year which results when 10 dBA are added to noise levels measured between 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. It is weighted to emphasize noise levels measured during the more sensitive nighttime hours. This descriptor is used in many federal, state and local standards and regulations. It is the standard noise descriptor used in the Noise Element.

Ambient Noise: This is the composite from all noise sources within a given area. The level of ambient noise represents the normal or existing noise level at a given location.

Intrusive Noise: Any noise which is perceptible over ambient noise levels. Noise may be considered intrusive even if its level is below accepted standards.

Intermittent Noise: Noise which is present only on occasion. If it is loud, these short duration sounds can interfere with human activities, such as sleep or conversation. Examples are train whistles,

trucks starting up, a fork lift at a warehouse, and a power saw at a construction site.

Exterior and Interior Noise: Noise that occurs outside or inside a structure. Although state standards are oriented toward prevention of excessive interior noise levels, excessive exterior levels can create unsuitable interior environments. There is generally a reduction of 15 decibels between exterior and interior noise levels; thus, if exterior noise levels are 60 dBA, interior noise levels would be 45 dBA (assuming standard construction practices are used).

Pure Tone: A component of a sound which may be associated with a musical pitch. Musical sounds clearly have pure tone components. Other examples of sources which may produce pure tones are transformers and rotating machinery. The perceived humming of such machinery is evidence of the presence of pure tones.

Impulsive Sound: Sounds whose noise levels are high only for brief periods of time.

SONOMA'S NOISE ENVIRONMENT

Existing Conditions

Generally speaking, noise has not been a serious problem in Sonoma. Table 35 indicates that, in 1984, over 90% of the community lived in areas that were well below state standards for outdoor noise levels (60 dBA Ldn). Actual noise measurements in a representative residential neighborhood located away from arterials yielded a Ldn value of 48 dBA. Noise in Sonoma is primarily generated by the following activities:

Motor Vehicle Traffic: Motor vehicle traffic is the only major source of ongoing noise in the city. Major roadways in the city currently generate between 50-60 dBA at the 50-foot setback from the centerline of the street.

Sebastiani Winery: During and prior to 1978, warehousing operations south of the binning and bottling facility at the winery produced intermittent noise which annoyed neighboring residents. Since that time, the bulk wine operation has been relocated, a noise barrier wall and other attenuation devices have been installed, and numerous other measures have been taken (such as truck rerouting) to reduce noise. Currently, the winery generates few if any complaints.

Intrusive Noise: Any noise which is perceptible over the normal ambient noise level may be considered intrusive and result in annoyance and complaints. The degree of intrusiveness depends upon the character of the noise in question, as well as its level rela-

tive to the ambient noise environment. Generally, such incidents occur infrequently in Sonoma. An example of this type of noise event would be a teen dance held in the Veterans' Memorial Building, resulting in complaints by nearby residents. Given the source-to-receiver distance in this case, it is unlikely that the sound levels experienced by the residents are excessively high in an absolute sense. Apparently, however, the levels are sufficiently high relative to the low ambient levels experienced in the neighborhood that the sound was considered intrusive. Such incidents are not uncommon in urban areas.

Sonoma Skypark: This small, general aviation airfield lies approximately 1.5 miles southeast of the nearest Sonoma city limit. A recent noise study conducted by the airport owner for the County Planning Department indicates that the 50-Ldn noise contour lies approximately one mile from the city limit; higher Ldn contours lie further away. Thus the Skypark does not adversely impact the city's ambient noise environment. Although aircraft produce intermittent, intrusive noise, such noise from aircraft using the Skypark is negligible. The current traffic pattern lies to the south of the airstrip and the majority of aircraft using the airport does not fly over the city.

Helicopters: Helicopters are occasionally operated within the city for medical emergencies at Sonoma Valley Hospital and near the police station for law enforcement purposes. Typically, a helicopter passing 500 feet overhead generates a maximum intermittent noise level of 90 dBA. Helicopter operations are rare in Sonoma, typically numbering no more than twenty per year. They have a negligible impact on the ambient noise environment of the city.

Existing (1984) and Projected (2005) Community Noise Exposure				
	Below 55 dBA	55-60 dBA	60-65 dBA	65-70 dBA
1984 Percentage of Population Exposed:	75%	17%	7.5%	0.5%
2005 Percentage of Population Exposed:	79%	13%	7%	1%

Source: Sound Solutions, 1984

Table 35

Future Conditions

Motor vehicle traffic is expected to remain the primary source of noise in the city of Sonoma. However, a comparison of the future noise exposure inventory with the current noise exposure inventory (see Table 35, previous page) shows that the percentage of the population exposed to various noise levels is not expected to

change although the distribution differs slightly. Thus most of the future community is not expected to be exposed to noise levels over 60 dBA, and a majority (79%) will be exposed to levels less than 55 dBA. This analysis is based on projected noise contours along roadways and estimated population growth and development in the city of Sonoma.

More specific information on noise contours associated with existing (1995) and projected (2005) traffic volumes is provided in Appendix D of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the General Plan update. This material is incorporated as part of the adopted General Plan by reference.

NOISE LEVELS AND REPRESENTATIVE SOURCES

Table 36 provides examples of various noise levels, their measurement in dBA (decibels) and representative sources in the city. This table will help the reader understand the intensity range of different noise generators in Sonoma.

<i>Representative Noise Levels</i>		
<u>Loudness Description</u>	<u>Noise Level In dBA</u>	<u>Representative Source</u>
Threshold of Pain	130	Civil Defense Siren at 100 feet
	120	Jet Take off at 200 feet
	110	Auto horn at three feet
Very Loud	100	Pile Driver at 50 feet
	90	Helicopter passing 500 feet overhead
Moderately Loud	80	Loud motorcycle at 50 feet
		Accelerating school bus at 50 feet
		Diesel truck idling at 50 feet
	70	Conversational voice level at four feet
Quiet	60	Automobile idling at 50 feet.
	50	Private business office
	40	Typical quiet neighborhood.
Very Quiet		Typical lowest evening level in a quiet neighborhood.
	30	Soft whisper at ten feet.
Just Audible	20	Rustling leaves at 10 feet
Threshold of hearing	10	

Source: Sound Solutions/Illingworth and Rodkin

Table 36

FEDERAL AND STATE NOISE STANDARDS

The State of California has taken an active role in protecting citizens from adverse noise levels. The Noise Control Act, passed in 1973, expressed the State's concern about the health effects of excessive noise and declared it State policy to minimize adverse noise impacts. This policy is implemented, in part, by the State's requirement that all local general plans to include a noise element prepared in conformance with State planning guidelines. In 1974 the State passed the Noise Insulation Standards, which established specific standards for exterior and interior noise environments in multi-family residential structures. While originally intended to apply to attached dwellings, many local jurisdictions also apply them to detached single-family units. Sonoma's Noise Element applies them to both dwelling types. Table 37 lists the accepted State and Federal standards for exterior/interior noise levels. Desired levels for the city are based on these standards as well as local conditions.

Federal and State Standards for Noise Levels

Noise Level in dBA	Standard	Source
70	Maximum annual Leq consistent with negligible loss of hearing.	Environmental Protection Agency
60	Maximum Ldn allowed outside new residential structures without consideration of noise mitigation measures.	State of California Noise Insulation Standards
50	Maximum interior intermittent noise level consistent with undisturbed sleep.	Various
45	Maximum Ldn allowed inside new residential structures due to external sources.	State of California Noise Insulation Standards

Source: *Sound Solutions*, 1984

Table 37

NOISE ASSESSMENT GUIDE

The ten-step process described below is used to evaluate the potential noise impacts of a proposed project and determine whether additional acoustical analysis is needed. This process is designed to facilitate informed, objective decisions regarding the

compatibility of proposed land uses with the existing noise environment. The goal is to ensure that the community's ambient noise level is not seriously degraded and that existing and future Sonoma residents can enjoy the relative quiet that currently prevails throughout the community.

Step 1: Application received.

Step 2: Identify Traffic Volume. Identify nearby roadway(s) that would affect or be affected by the project and determine their projected traffic volumes (refer to the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the General Plan update, Appendix D).

Step 3: Locate Noise Contours. Determine the location of existing and projected traffic noise Ldn contours (see Appendix D in the General Plan EIR.)

Step 4: Assess Compatibility. Compare projected Ldn values with compatibility criteria in Table 38. Is the proposal "Clearly Acceptable" or "Normally Acceptable"? If Yes, go to Step 8. If No, go to Step 5.

Step 5: Residential Use. Is a residential area impacted? If Yes, go to Step 6. If No, Go to Step 7.

Step 6: Require Noise Study. Require a noise study to demonstrate compliance with State noise insulation standards (Table 37) and City noise standards (Table 38). Go to Step 9.

Step 7: Project modifications. If proposal falls in the "Normally Acceptable" category, notify applicant that the project may create or be exposed to slightly adverse exterior noise levels. Encourage a professional design which incorporates noise mitigation measures as outlined in Policy 5 and ensures compliance with City noise standards (Table 38).

Step 8: Address Special Concerns. Are short duration noises involved (live music, truck loading, machine operations) which may significantly intrude on ambient levels in the surrounding neighborhood? Have there been substantial complaints about noise on or in the vicinity of the site? If yes, go to Step 9. If no, go to Step 10.

Step 9: Mitigate intrusive noise. Require a noise study to demonstrate compliance with City criteria for intrusive and intermittent noise see Policy 2 of the Noise Element and Tables 39 and 40). Go to Step 10.

Step 10: Findings. Make findings that all applicable criteria will be met, or if special circumstances merit, consider variances from City standards. Variances from State standards are not permitted.

NOISE LEVEL STANDARDS

Table 38 establishes the acceptable noise level standards for the city. Once the existing or potential noise level is determined for a particular location, that level can be compared to the levels in Table 38 to determine whether it is acceptable according to City standards. If it is not, mitigation to achieve an acceptable level should be required.

<i>Noise Level Standards</i>					
<u>Land Use</u>	<u><55</u>	<u>55-60</u>	<u>60-65</u>	<u>65-70</u>	<u>70-75</u>
Residential: Single family dwellings duplexes, condominiums, apartments, hotels.	++	+	o	-	--
Outdoor Public Facilities: ++ Neighborhood parks, amphitheaters, cemeteries.		+	o	-	--
Public Buildings: Schools, libraries, churches, nursing homes.	++	++	+	o	-
Commercial: Offices, retail, business and professional facilities.	++	++	+	o	-
Industrial: Manufacturing, utilities, and agricultural facilities.	++	++	++	+	o
Interpretations:					
++ <i>Clearly acceptable.</i> The activities associated with the specified use can be carried out with virtually no interference from noise.					
+ <i>Normally acceptable.</i> Occasional slight interference with outdoor activities may occur. Conventional structures will ensure that interior noise levels are compatible with indoor activities.					
o <i>Conditionally acceptable.</i> The indicated noise levels will cause moderate interference with outdoor activities and with indoor activities if windows are open. New construction should only be undertaken following a noise study and subject to the implementation of noise reduction measures to upgrade conditions to normally acceptable levels.					
- <i>Normally unacceptable.</i> Noise will create substantial interference with both indoor and outdoor activities. New construction should be discouraged. If construction does occur, noise mitigation should be required to bring exterior levels to normally acceptable levels and interior levels in compliance with state law.					
-- <i>Clearly unacceptable.</i> Unacceptable noise intrusion upon land use activities will occur. Adequate structural noise insulation will be impractical under most circumstances. New construction is generally not recommended.					

Source: Sound Solutions, 1984

Table 38

INTRUSIVE AND INTERMITTENT NOISE

The standards outlined in Tables 39 and 40 are applicable to proposed residential developments in areas where noise is an existing problem or the project could potentially create short duration noises that would significantly intrude on ambient levels (see Steps 8 and 9 in the Assessment Guide). Two types of noise are considered: 1) intrusive noise (any noise which is perceptible over ambient noise levels); and 2) intermittent noise (noise which is present only on occasion but could interfere with activities such as sleep or conversation).

In order to evaluate whether a project violates these standards, the services of an acoustical consultant must be retained. Steps 8 and 9 in the Assessment Guide will help the lay person determine whether this analysis is necessary.

Standards for Intrusive Noise

The Leq over a 15 minute period of time at any selected time of day shall be the noise level descriptor used to determine the impact of intrusive noise. The Leq of the noise source of concern shall be compared with a similar Leq of the ambient alone at a similar time of day. Measurements should be taken at the location where potential impacts are expected to be significant.

Once the Leq of the potentially intrusive source is determined, it shall be corrected as indicated in Table -. These corrections are intended to account for special noise source characteristics and the prevailing attitude of Sonoma residents toward noise.

If, after the corrections are made, the potentially intrusive noise source would cause exterior noise levels in the immediate or surrounding neighborhood to exceed the ambient level by more than 5 dBA, mitigation measures shall be developed to reduce the projected noise increase to less than 5 dbA above ambient levels.

Standards for Intermittent Noise

The standards contained in Table 40 are the maximum allowable interior intermittent noise levels for various types of people-occupied buildings. The intent of these standards is to ensure acceptable interior noise environments in the home and the workplace.

Standards and Adjustments for Intrusive Noise

<u>Type of Correction</u>	<u>Circumstances under which the correction applies</u>	<u>Correction¹</u>
Seasonal correction:	Summer (or year-round operation.	0 dBA
	Winter only (or windows always closed).	-5 dBA
Correction for previous exposure and community attitudes:	No prior experience with the intruding noise.	+5 dBA
	Community has some previous exposure to intruding noise, but little effort is being made to control the noise. Correction may also be applied if the community has not previously been exposed to the noise but is aware that serious efforts are being made to control the noise.	0 dBA
	Community has considerable previous exposure to the noise and the noise-maker's relations to the community are good.	- 5 dBA
	The community is aware that the operation causing the noise is very necessary and that it will not continue indefinitely. This correction can be applied to an operation of limited duration under emergency circumstances.	- 10 dBA
Pure tone or impulse characteristics:	No pure tone or impulsive character.	0 dBA
	Pure tones present.	+ 5 dBA
	Impulsive sounds present.	+ 5 dBA

1) Correction to be added to the measured or predicted 15 minute Leq of potentially intrusive noise source.

Source: Sound Solutions, 1984

Table 39

<i>Standards for intermittent Noise</i>		
<u>Land Use Category</u>	<u>Typical Activity to Remain Undisturbed</u>	<u>Maximum Interior Intermittent Noise Level (dBA)</u>
Residential		
Single family dwellings, duplexes, apartments, condominiums, hotels.	Daytime conversation at 5'	60
	Nighttime conversation at 10'	55
	Sleep	50
Public Facilities		
Concert Hall.	Listening	25
Theater.	Listening	30
School Auditorium.	Listening	35
Movie Theater.	Listening	45
Church Sanctuary.	Listening	45
School Classroom.	Speech at 20', raised voice	55
Library.	Speech at 3', normal voice	55
School Laboratory.	Speech at 6', normal voice	60
Commercial		
Conference Rooms.	Speech at 12', normal voice	55
Staff offices.	Speech at 6', normal voice	60
Sales, secretarial.	Telephone use	65
Restaurants.	Conversation at 4', normal voice	65
Markets, retail stores.	Conversation at 4', normal voice	65
Industrial		
Laboratory.	Speech at 6', normal voice	60
Machine Shop.	Speech at 3', raised voice	75
Assembly, construction.	Speech at 2', raised voice	75

1) Correction to be added to the measured or predicted 15 minute Leq of potentially intrusive noise source.

Source: Sound Solutions, 1984

Table 40

STATIONARY NOISE SOURCES

In areas designated for commercial and industrial development, the potential exists for new stationary noise sources to be introduced which could affect noise-sensitive adjacent land uses. Examples of stationary noise sources include loading docks, parking lots, and mechanical equipment. The standards set forth in Table 41, facing page, are to be used in evaluating applications for commercial development or redevelopment which have been determined through the environmental review process to have the potential to result in adverse impacts caused by stationary noise sources (see policy 8 of the Noise Element).

**Maximum Allowable Noise Exposure:
Stationary Noise Sources¹**

	Daytime⁵ (7 a.m. to 10 p.m.)	Nighttime^{2, 5} (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.)
Hourly Leq dB ³	50	40
Maximum Level, dB ³	70	60
Maximum Level, dB Impulsive Noise ⁴	65	55

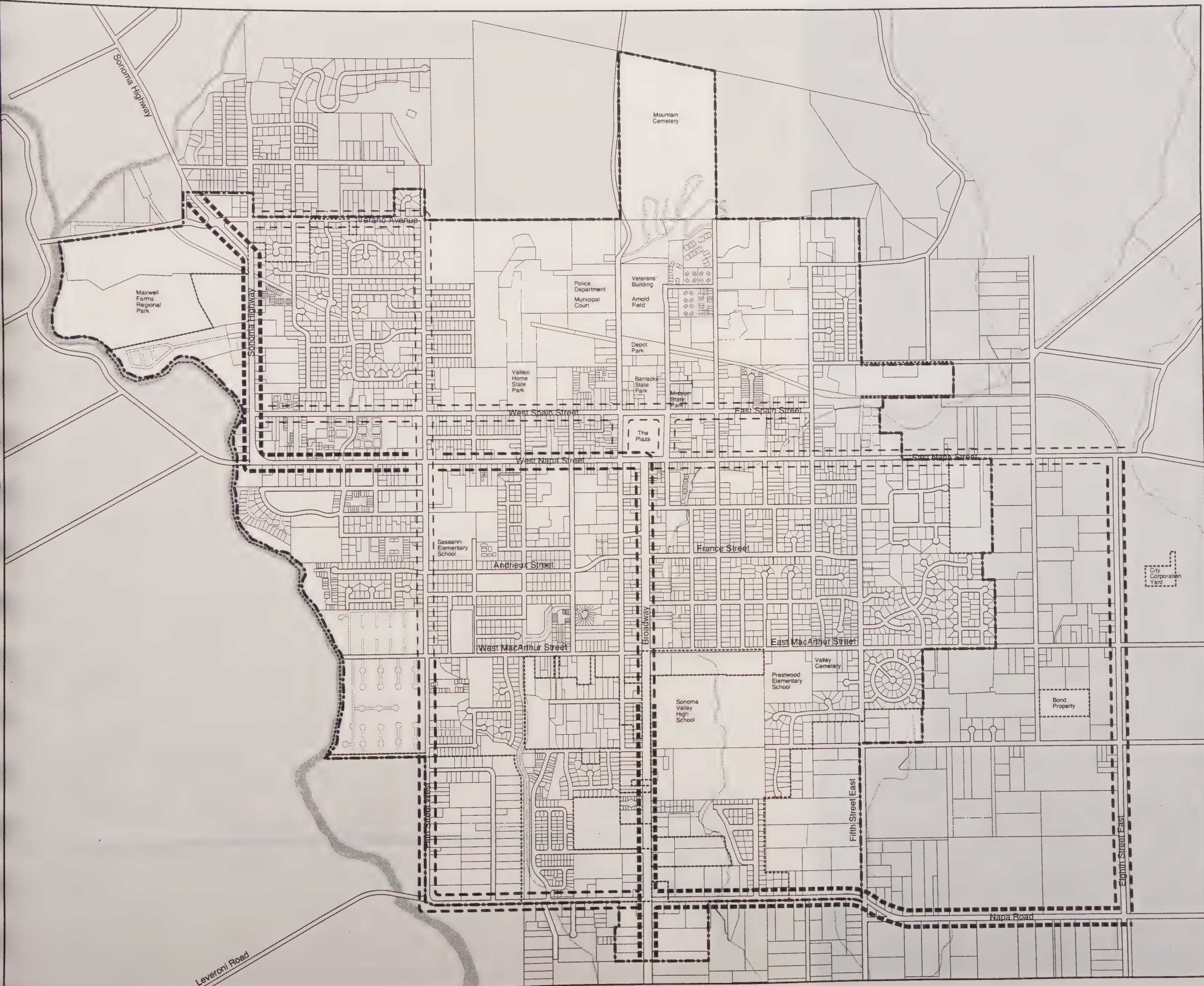
1. As determined at the property line of the receiving land use. When determining the effectiveness of mitigation measures, the standards may be applied on the receptor side of noise barriers or other property line noise mitigation measures.
2. Applies only when the receiving land use operates or is occupied during nighttime hours.
3. Sound level measurements shall be made with “slow” meter response.
4. Sound level measurements shall be made with “fast” meter response.
5. Allowable levels shall be raised to the ambient noise levels where the ambient levels exceed the allowable levels. Allowable levels shall be reduced 5 dB if the ambient Leq is at least 10 dB lower than the allowable level.

Source: Illingworth and Rodkin

Table 41

Projected Noise Contours

- 60-64 Ldn
- 65-69 Ldn
- 70-74 Ldn
- City Limit
- Sphere of Influence



Note: Noise contours reflect projected traffic noise fifty feet from the street centerline for the year 2005 as measured in Ldn (Day/Night Noise Level). This measure averages the day/night sound level in decibels over one year and is weighted to emphasize noise levels measured during the more sensitive nighttime hours.

City of Sonoma
Community Development Department



Addenda

City of Sonoma
1995-2005 General Plan



GLOSSARY

Above Moderate-income Household

Above moderate-income households are those earning more than 120% of the County median income. In Sonoma County in 1995, the median annual income was \$48,400.

Affordable

A household's ability to make monthly payments necessary to obtain housing. Housing is considered affordable when a household pays no more than 30 percent of its gross monthly income (GMI) for housing.

Affordable Housing Unit

Any housing unit capable of being purchased or rented by a household with a very low, low, or moderate income, based on a household's ability to make monthly payments necessary to obtain housing. A housing unit is considered affordable when it may be rented or purchased by households in a particular income category spending no more than 30% of gross monthly income on housing costs (excluding utilities).

Architectural Review

Regulations and procedures requiring the exterior design of structures to be in harmony with the general appearance, historical character, and/or style of surrounding structures or areas.

Architectural Review Commission

A five-member commission authorized by the City Council to review site plans, building elevations, landscaping and signs for specified types of development. The Commission approves, disapproves, or approves with modifications, a subject project.

Bikeways

A term that encompasses bicycle lanes, bicycle paths, and bicycle routes.

Building

Any structure used or intended for supporting or sheltering any use or occupancy.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

A State law requiring State and local agencies to regulate activities with consideration for environmental protection. If a proposed activity has the potential for an adverse environmental impact, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared.

Caltrans

California Department of Transportation.

Capital Improvements Program

A program, administered by City government and reviewed by the Planning Commission, which schedules permanent improvements five or six years into the future to fit the City's projected fiscal capability. The program generally is reviewed annually, and the first year of the program is adopted in the City's annual budget.

Co-housing

A housing development planned, constructed, and occupied by a cohesive group, typically featuring common use areas for dining, recreation, and socializing, with relatively small individual living quarters.

Community Park

Land with full public access intended to provide recreation opportunities beyond those supplied by neighborhood parks. Community parks are larger in scale than neighborhood parks but smaller than regional parks.

Conservation

The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or neglect.

Consistent

Free from variation or contradiction. Programs in the General Plan are to be consistent, not contradictory or preferential. State law requires consistency between a general plan and implementation measures such as the zoning ordinance.

Critical Facility

Facilities housing or serving many people which are necessary in the event of an earthquake or flood, such as hospitals, fire, police, and emergency service facilities; utility “lifeline” facilities, such as water, electricity, and gas supply; sewage disposal; and communications and transportation facilities.

Dedication

The turning over of private land for public use by an owner or developer and the acceptance of land for such use by the governmental agency having jurisdiction over the public function for which it will be used. Dedications for roads, parks, school sites, or other public uses often are made conditions for City approval of a development.

Dedication, In lieu of

Cash payments which may be required of an owner or developer as a substitute for a dedication of land, usually calculated in dollars per lot or square foot of land or building area, and referred to as in lieu fees or in lieu contributions.

Density (Housing)

For housing, density is the number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land. All densities specified in the General Plan are expressed in maximum number of units per gross developable acre.

Density Bonus

The allocation of development rights that allows a parcel to accommodate additional square footage or additional residential units beyond the maximum for which the parcel is zoned, usually in exchange for the provision of a specified percentage of affordable units.

Development

The physical extension and/or construction of urban land uses. Development activities include: subdivision of land; construction or alteration of structures, roads, utilities, and other facilities; installation of septic systems; grading; deposit of refuse, debris, or fill materials; and clearing of natural vegetation cover (with the exception of agricultural activities). Routine repair and maintenance activities are exempted.

Dwelling Unit

A room or group of rooms (including sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation facilities, but not more than one kitchen), which constitutes an independent housekeeping unit, occupied or intended for occupancy by one household on a long-term basis.

Emergency Shelter (or Emergency Housing)

A facility which provides immediate, short-term shelter for homeless persons, including victims of catastrophe, abused persons, and the long-term homeless.

Enhance

To improve existing conditions by increasing the quantity or quality of beneficial uses.

Environment

CEQA defines environment as “the physical conditions which exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, fauna, noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance.” This General Plan defines environment to also include social and economic conditions.

Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

A report that assesses all the environmental characteristics of an area and determines what effects or impacts will result if the area is altered or disturbed by a proposed action. (See “California Environmental Quality Act.”)

Feasible

Capable of being done, executed, or managed successfully from the standpoint of the physical and/or financial abilities of the implementor(s).

Fog-line

A striped line along the shoulder of a road delineating the shoulder or on-street parking area. The area delineated by a fog-line may also be used by bicyclists.

Flood, 100-Year

The magnitude of a flood expected to occur on the average every 100 years, based on historical data. The 100-year flood has a 1/100, or one percent, chance of occurring in any given year.

Flood Plain

All land between the floodway and the upper elevation of the 100-year flood. (See "Floodway" under "Land Use Categories.")

Gateway

A point along a roadway entering the city at which a motorist gains a sense of having left the environs and of having entered the city. A gateway may be a publicly-owned place having an area for motorists to pull off or park and view maps, gather information, and generally become oriented to Sonoma; or it may be a privately-owned place which through special development standards or guidelines (e.g., for landscaping and signs), marks entry to the city; or a combination of both.

General Plan

A compendium of the City's policies regarding its long-term development, in the form of official maps and accompanying text. The General Plan is a legal document required of each local agency by the State of California Government Code Section 65301 and is adopted by the City Council. The General Plan may be called a "City Plan," "Comprehensive Plan," or "Master Plan."

Goal

A general, overall, and ultimate purpose, aim, or end toward which the City will direct effort.

Greenbelt

Open space surrounding a community, sometimes serving to separate one community from another. A greenbelt may be composed of park lands, agricultural lands, natural areas, or very low density residential areas.

Group Home

A state-authorized or certified facility which provides 24-hour care and shelter for handicapped or dependent persons in a residential setting.

Growth Management

The use by a community of a variety of techniques in combination to establish the amount, type, and rate of growth desired by the community and to channel that growth into designated areas. Growth management policies can be implemented through growth rates, zoning, capital improvements programs, public facilities ordinances, urban limit lines, and other programs.

Habitat

The physical location or type of environment in which an organism or biological population lives or occurs.

Hazardous Material

An injurious substance, including (among others) pesticides, herbicides, poisons, toxic metals and chemicals, liquefied natural gas, explosives, volatile chemicals, and nuclear fuels.

Historic Preservation

The preservation of historically significant structures and neighborhoods.

Home Occupation

A commercial activity conducted solely by the occupant of a particular dwelling unit in a manner incidental to residential occupancy.

Household

All persons residing in a single dwelling unit.

Housing Unit

The place of permanent or customary abode of a person or household. A housing unit may be a single-family dwelling, a condominium, a modular home, a mobile home, a cooperative, or be located

ed in a multi-family dwelling, or any other residential unit considered real property under State law. A housing unit has, at least, cooking facilities, a bathroom, and a place to sleep. It also is a dwelling that cannot be moved without substantial damage or cost.

Impact Fees

Fees levied on the developer of a project by the City as compensation for unmitigated impacts the project will produce.

Infill

Development of vacant land (usually individual lots or left-over properties) within areas that are already largely developed.

Infrastructure

Public services and facilities, such as sewage-disposal systems, water-supply systems, other utility systems, and roads.

Landmark

Refers to a building or site having historic, architectural, social, or cultural significance and designated for preservation by the local, state, or federal government.

Low-income Household

Low-income households are those earning between 50% and 80% of the County median income. In Sonoma County in 1995, the median annual income was \$48,400.

Mitigate

To ameliorate, alleviate, or avoid to the extent reasonably feasible. According to CEQA, mitigations include the following: (a) Avoiding an impact by not taking a certain action or parts of an action; (b) Minimizing an impact by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation; (c) Rectifying an impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the environment affected; (d) Reducing or eliminating an impact by preserving and maintaining operations during the life of the action; (e) Compensating for an impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

Mixed Use

Any combination of commercial, office and residential use. The intent of the Mixed Use land use designation is to allow housing (at densities of up to 15 dwelling units per acre) along with commercial uses including but not limited to retail commercial, offices, and restaurants.

Mobile Home

A structure, transportable in one or more sections, built on a permanent chassis and designed for use as a single-family dwelling unit when connected to required utilities.

Moderate-income Household

Moderate-income households are those earning between 80% and 120% of the County median income. In Sonoma County in 1995, the median annual income was \$48,400.

Multi-family Dwelling

A building legally accommodating more than one family.

Neighborhood Park

City-owned land intended to serve the recreation needs of people living or working within a one-half mile radius of the park and also intended to contribute to a distinct neighborhood identity.

Policy

A specific statement of principle or of guiding actions which implies clear commitment but is not mandatory. A general direction that the City will follow in order to meet its goals and objectives by undertaking specific action programs.

Rare or Endangered Species

A species of animal or plant listed in: Sections 670.2 or 670.5, Title 14, California Administrative Code; or Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 17.11 or Section 17.2, pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act designating species as rare, threatened, or endangered.

Regional Park

A park typically 150-500 acres in size focusing on activities and natural features not included in most other types of parks and often based on a specific scenic or recreational opportunity.

Residential

Land designated by the City's General Plan and zoning ordinance for buildings consisting only of dwelling units. May be vacant or unimproved. (See "Dwelling Unit.")

Senior Housing

Typically one- and two-bedroom apartments designed to meet the needs of persons 62 years of age and older, and restricted to occupancy by them. In Sonoma, such units will typically be constructed at densities of 10 to 20 units per acre, in non-institutional settings, in proximity to community amenities and public transportation.

Single-family Dwelling, Attached

A dwelling unit occupied or intended for occupation by only one family that is structurally connected with other such dwelling units.

Single-family Dwelling, Detached

A dwelling unit occupied or intended for occupation by only one family that is structurally independent from any other such dwelling unit or structure intended for residential or other use.

Sphere of Influence

The area of incorporated and unincorporated territory representing the City's probable ultimate physical boundary and service area for the period of the General Plan. The sphere of influence must also be adopted by the Local Agency Formation Commission. Requirements and regulations pertaining to spheres of influence are established by state law through the Cortese-Knox act (Government Code Section 56000 et seq).

Structure

Anything constructed or erected which requires location on the ground (excluding swimming pools, fences, and walls used as fences).

Substandard Housing

Residential dwellings which, because of their physical condition, do not provide safe and sanitary housing.

Tourism

The business of providing services for persons traveling for pleasure. Tourism can be measured through changes in the transient occupancy tax or restaurant sales.

Transitional Housing

A facility designed to provide medium- to long-term shelter for homeless persons, in conjunction with programs and supplemental services intended to remove the basis of homelessness.

Trees, Street

Trees strategically planted—usually in parkway strips or medians—to enhance the visual quality of a street.

Undevelopable

Specific areas where topographic, geologic, and/or soil conditions indicate a significant danger to future occupants.

Use

The purpose for which a lot or structure is or may be leased, occupied, maintained, arranged, designed, intended, constructed, erected, moved, altered, and/or enlarged pursuant to the City's zoning ordinance and General Plan land use designation.

Very Low-income Household

Very low-income households are those earning less than 50% of the County median income. In Sonoma County in 1995, the median annual income was \$48,400.

Waterway

Natural or once natural flowing (perennially or intermittently) water including rivers, streams, and

creeks. Includes natural waterways that have been channelized, but does not include manmade channels, ditches, and underground drainage and sewage systems.

Zoning

The division of a city by legislative regulations into areas, or zones, which specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas; a program that carries out policies of the General Plan.

Zoning District

A designated section of the city for which prescribed land use requirements and building and development standards are uniform.

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City Council, Planning Commission, and Public Participation

The following members, past and present, of the the City Council the Planning Commission, and the public, contributed greatly in the development of this General Plan:

City Council: Larry Barnett, Valerie Brown, Phyllis Carter, Anthony Cermak, Robert Cannard, Richard Dorf, Albert Mazza, Larry Murphy, Louis Ramponi.

Planning Commission: Dick Ashford, Grant Fletcher, Jim Ghilotti, Lorraine Hohorst, Russell Jaycox, David Johnson, Robert Kannor, Frank Mazzone, Dorothy Nickolai, Pamela Stephens, Michael Szykowny, Ignacio Vella, George Weiss.

Public: Sonoma Valley Architects and Designers, the Group of Five, Sonoma Ecology Center . . . and the Citizens of Sonoma

Baily Christensen, the official mascot of the 1995 General Plan update.

CITY OF SONOMA

RESOLUTION 57-95

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SONOMA ADOPTING THE 1995-2005 SONOMA GENERAL PLAN

WHEREAS, the City of Sonoma, acting in the public interest, has undertaken to revise and update its 1985 General Plan in accordance with State law and General Plan Guidelines; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council established an extensive program of public outreach and involvement, including community forums, study sessions, and public hearings in order to assure that the 1995-2005 Sonoma General Plan reflects the needs and aspirations of the community; and,

WHEREAS, copies of the draft General Plan have been circulated to state, county, regional, and local agencies for review and comment and made available to the general public through City Hall and the public library; and,

WHEREAS, notice of Planning Commission and City Council public hearings on the draft General Plan were prepared and published in accordance with Section 95901 of the California Government Code; and,

WHEREAS since September of 1993, the Planning Commission has held ten (10) duly noticed public hearings and fifteen (15) study sessions on the draft General Plan, including the Community Development Element, the Land Use Plan, the Local Economy Element, the Housing Element, the Environmental Resources Element, the Circulation Element, the Noise Element, and the Public Safety Element; and,

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission considered all relevant testimony, written and oral, as well as the information contained in the Environmental Impact Report in making its recommendations to the City Council; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council held public hearings on the recommendations of the Planning Commission as well as related General Plan matters brought to the Council's attention by the public, city staff, and its own members on the following dates: March 6, 1995, March 20, 1995, April 3, 1995, April 12, 1995, April 24, 1995, May 8, 1995, May 31, 1995, June 12, 1995, August 16, 1995, and August 30, 1995; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council, following a duly noticed public hearing, certified the Environmental Impact Report on the Sonoma General Plan update on August 30, 1995;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council hereby finds and declares as follows:

1. The 1995-2005 Sonoma General Plan has been prepared in accordance with State law, State General Plan Guidelines and a consensus of opinion of the citizens of Sonoma and supersedes all previously adopted General Plan maps and text.
2. The General Plan addresses all relevant issues required by Government Code 65302 et. seq. and those additional issues raised by the community.

3. Each issue has been adequately studied and analyzed and is addressed through goal, policy, and implementation program statements, as well as data and background information contained in the plan text, official maps, and Technical Appendix
4. The General Plan is current, comprehensive, long-term, and internally consistent.
5. The General Plan covers all territory within the jurisdiction as well as lands outside the City as delineated in the sphere of influence and the Planning Area. and addresses regional concerns affecting the City of Sonoma.
6. The Housing Element and related background section has been prepared and revised in accordance with the requirements of the State Department of Housing and Community Development and sets forth, in good faith, the efforts of the City of Sonoma to provide affordable housing and meet its long-standing commitment to growth management. The City Council further finds, according to section 65302.8 of the Government Code, that the policies and programs of the Housing Element will accommodate the City's share of the need for regional housing and will not reduce housing opportunities in the region.
7. The General plan has been prepared in a format that best suits the needs of the City and is clearly written.
8. The Land Use Plan and the Circulation Improvement Plan are directly related to the and consistent with the text of the General Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Sonoma hereby adopts findings of fact (identified as exhibit A) and a mitigation monitoring program (identified as exhibit B) in accordance with sections 21081 and 21081.6 of the California Environmental Quality Act.

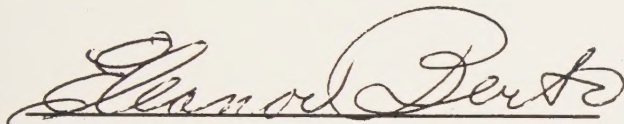
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council hereby 1) adopts the 1995-2005 Sonoma General Plan, the Land Use Plan, the Circulation Improvement Plan, and all other incorporated text, maps, and figures, as the official planning policy document of the City of Sonoma; and 2) declares that no applications for the amendment of said plan shall be accepted for one (1) year from the date of adoption unless it is deemed by the City Council to be necessary because of an emergency or discovery of an error in the adopted text or maps.

The foregoing Resolution was duly adopted this 30th day of August, 1995, by the following roll call vote:

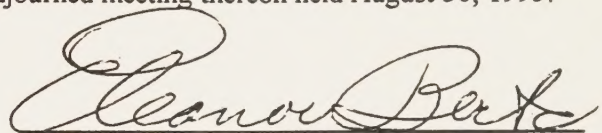
AYES: (5) Cln. Barnett, Dorf, Mazza, Ramponi, Mayor Carter
NOES: (0) None
ABSENT: (0) None
ABSTAINING: (0) None


MAYOR

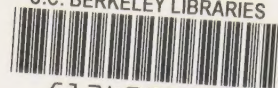
ATTEST:


CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly and regularly passed by the City Council of the City of Sonoma at a regular adjourned meeting thereon held August 30, 1995.


CITY CLERK

U.C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES



C124921795

